

Evoking Change Talk

Change talk refers to client language that favors movement toward a particular change. Change talk tends to emerge naturally in health coaching conversations. When it doesn't, we can invite or evoke clients' arguments for change.

There are two main categories of change talk: that which indicates a person is considering or preparing to change (DARN = desire, ability, reasons, need); the other indicating a readiness to take action (CAT = commitment, activation, taking steps).

Preparatory Change Talk: "thinking about changing"

Desire: I want to, I would like to, I wish, I hope

Ability: I can, I could, I am able to

Reasons: It would help me, I'd be better off if

Need: I need to, I have to, something has to change

Mobilizing Change Talk: "taking action"

Commitment: I will, I promise, I give you my word

Activation: I'm willing to, I am ready to, I am prepared to

Taking steps: I cut back on my weekend drinking

METHODS FOR EVOKING CHANGE TALK

There are a number of methods health coaches can use to evoke or "call forth" client statements favoring change. These approaches are listed below with examples for each.

ASKING EVOCATIVE QUESTIONS

- What concerns, if any, do you have about your current situation?
- What changes, if any, are you considering?



- Regarding this issue/dilemma, what's okay about how things are now? What's not okay?
- If you choose not to change, what would be at stake?
- If you were to make a change, what would be your reasons for doing so?
- Of the reasons you just gave, what would you consider to be your best reason?
- If you were to make this change, how would you go about it to be successful? What do you think would work for you?
- Given everything going on in your life currently, how important or urgent is it for you to make this change?
- Who or what could be helpful to you in supporting this change?
- What, if anything, do you think you might do as a very next step to move towards this change?

INVITING ELABORATION

- You mentioned that you used to exercise more regularly. In what ways did that benefit you?
- When was a time recently when you felt particularly calm and grounded? What was that like?
- What do you notice about those times when you're feeling less playful and creative?
- What will it look like when you're eating the way you want to be eating?

USING THE IMPORTANCE RULER

- On a scale of 0 to 10, how important is it for you to make this change? What makes it a ____ and not a ____ (several numbers lower)?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all important									Extremely important	



USING THE CONFIDENCE RULER

- On a scale of 0 to 10, how confident are you that you could make this change? What makes it already a ____ and not ____ (several numbers lower)? What would move it from a ____ to a ____ (next highest number)?
- Note: Confidence rulers are most effective in the planning phase once a specific plan has been laid out.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all confident									Extremely confident	

EXPLORING EXTREMES

- What concerns you absolutely most about ____?
- What are the very best results you could imagine if you made this change?

LOOKING BACK

- What were things like before when you ____? What do you think changed?
- What did you envision for your life when you were younger?
- In the past when you've taken time to prepare and eat healthier meals, what was good about that?

LOOKING FORWARD

- What are your hopes as you look towards the future?
- If you choose not to change, what do you see happening down the road? What might be at stake?
- If you do change, how would that affect your life? What might be some likely benefits?
- How would you like things to be different in the next month/year/three years?