

Behavior Change Skills

Coaching Worksheets

Behavior Change skills are communication strategies that elicit thoughts and talk from youth and families to consider and move toward behavior change. To operationalize this process of guiding the person through the stages of Readiness to change and strengthen their motivation and self-efficacy to make the change. you can use several Behavior Change Skills, which include:



- ▶ Identifying & Resolving Ambivalence
- ▶ Evoking Change Talk
- ▶ Softening Sustain Talk
- ▶ Identifying & Developing Discrepancies
- ▶ Strategic Reflections
- ▶ Giving information
- ▶ Decisional Balancing
- ▶ Differentially Responding to the Stages of Readiness to Change
- ▶ Shaping Successful Behavior
- ▶ Reflective Discussions

It's important to know that some of these skills will be used with a high frequency, and others less often. In the table below, we offer some guidelines on the frequency of their usage.

USE FREQUENTLY	USE WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF	USE SPARINGLY TO ASSURE AUTHENTICITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify and Resolve Ambivalence ▶ Evoking Change Talk ▶ Softening Sustain Talk ▶ Strategic Reflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reflective Discussion ▶ Developing Discrepancies ▶ Differentially responding to Stages of Readiness to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Giving Information ▶ Decisional Balancing

Behavior Change Skills

Evoking Change Talk	Evoking questions actively encourage the youth and family's own language in favor of making changes and having the confidence to do so. Evoking is the process of bringing forth the arguments for change (change talk) from them.
Softening Sustain talk	Sustain talk is the side of ambivalence that makes the case for no changing. Reflective listening to sustain talk to understand its source can be engaging and provides an understanding that builds empathy. Once understood redirecting it to change talk supports behavior change.
Identifying and Resolving Ambivalence	For people in the early stages of change creating Ambivalence can start consideration for change. Identification and evoking Ambivalence at this stage is a valuable guiding skill. Once the Ambivalence is clearer you can use Strategic Reflections, Discrepancies and Decisional Balancing to strengthen change talk and soften sustain talk moving forward to change.
Developing Discrepancies	Discrepancies occur when the person's words or behavior are at odds with their goals and values. A key to developing a successful discrepancy is that it reflects back to the person what they have said. This means evoking the different parts of the discrepancy from them and clarifying your understanding of each part before reflecting it back.
Strategic Reflections	When reflections are used strategically to elicit change talk they can be very effective behavior change skills. They can heighten awareness to improve the possibility of change, move the person forward gently and/or clarify the person's intent. They can be used to put an idea into the person's head by changing the tense, or slightly altering the meaning.
Giving Information and Sharing Experiences	At times sharing information with the youth and family can offer them insights and options that support them to make more informed decisions. This may include information from outside sources, options of available resources or supports, or shared experiences from other youth and families in similar circumstance. We first seek collaboration to empathize autonomy.
Decisional Balancing/Pros & Cons	Decisional Balancing is a strategy to elicit from the youth or family the good things and some of the not so good things about a behavior change. We have them look at the costs of making <u>and not</u> making a change, and the benefits of making and <u>not making</u> a change. We call the formal version of this skill (where you fill out a form) Decisional Balancing, and the informal verbal version, Pros & Cons.
Differential Responding to the Stage of Change	Differential responding is matching the relational and behavior change skills to the current stage of readiness to change of the youth and family.
Shaping Behavior	Shaping is a MiiWrap strategy of breaking large goals into smaller manageable objectives and reinforcing each of the steps to the larger goal.
Reflective Discussion	As part of the cycle of support MiiWrap Staff prepare the person for each activity through a Collaborative Reflective Discussion about what we are going to do and why. And after each step, we reflect on how it went and possible improvements that might be made in future similar activities.

EVOKING CHANGE TALK

The MiiWrap Mindset views successful change coming from the youth or family members through increased Self-Motivation and belief in their own Self-Efficacy to make successful change. Change talk are signs of this Motivation. Research and experience show us that increasing the amount and strength of change talk increases motivation and predicts behavior change. Change talk can be categorized into two different types, **Preparation** to change talk, and **Mobilizing** change talk. Preparatory talk statements made by the person that include those identified as **Desire, Ability, Reason or Need**. Statements that include **Commitment, Activation or Taking Steps** are of the mobilizing type Each type of talk. These seven statements make up the acronym **DARN CAT**. Evoking is using questions and reflections to draw out this change talk.

When **we** talk, and make suggestions, the person is being talked to, **not evoked!** Evoking is getting the person to state the arguments for change, not us. Using evocative questions or reflections to promote greater awareness of or concern for the problem, recognition of the advantages of change, or increased optimism to change, improves self-motivation and self-efficacy. Significant strategies to evoke behavior change talk include:

- **Asking Evocative Open-Ended Questions** such as, *why would you want to make this change?*
- **Asking for Elaboration** or more detail when a change talk theme emerges, *how do you see this happening?*
- Probing deeper by **Asking for Examples**. *Describe a specific example of when this happens.*
- Asking them to **Look Back** about a time before the current concern emerged: *How have things been better in the past?*
- Similarly, you could ask them to **Look Forward**, *what may happen if things continue as they are (status quo) or If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different?*
- You might clarify Ambivalence by **Querying Extremes** by *asking about the best and worst-case scenarios if the change is made or not made to elicit additional information.*
- You can use **Change Rulers** to have the individual assess importance, motivation or self-efficacy. On a scale where one is not at all important, and ten is extremely important, how important is it to you to change _____? Follow up: Explain why are you at a ___ and not (lower number)? Or What might happen that could move you from ___ to a _____ (higher number)?
- You can Explore Goals and Values. *What values are most important to you? How does this behavior fit into what is important to you?"*

HIGHER QUALITY EVOKING

- **ASKS QUESTION IN AN ACCEPTING AND NONJUDGMENTAL MANNER**
- **ASKS QUESTIONS NATURALLY, CLEARLY AND SIMPLY**
- **IDENTIFIES OPPORTUNITIES TO EVOKE**
- **HONORS SUSTAIN TALK**
- **LET'S THE PERSON TALK AND MAKE THE ARGUMENT FOR CHANGE**
- **ALLOW TIME FOR THEM TO RESPOND**

LOWER QUALITY EVOKING

- **SEEMS TO PUSH CHANGE TALK AND IGNORES SUSTAIN TALK**
- **TRIES TO PERSUADE THE PERSON**
- **ATTEMPTING TO ELICIT A STATEMENT THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PERSON'S STAGE OF CHANGE**
- **ASKS LEADING JUDGMENTAL QUESTIONS (WHY HAVEN'T YOU CHANGED?)**

NOTES

- **MOVE FROM SUSTAIN TALK TO CHANGE TALK NATURALLY**
- **AVOID PRESSING FOR ANSWERS, LET THEM COME NATURALLY**
- **BE AWARE OF THE PERSON'S STAGE OF CHANGE**
- **USE SCALING SPARINGLY TO ASSURE GENUINENESS**

SOFTENING SUSTAIN TALK

Difficulties arise in the process of talking to people and guiding them to behavior change. Historically these difficulties have been labeled as resistance. Miller & Rollnick (2013), however are moving away from this construct because it places the responsibility with the youth or family member and lumps several discretely different phenomena with the same label. When guiding is done with fidelity to the MiiWrap Mindset these tensions are far less likely to occur. Two of the most frequent challenges are when the person does not want to make a change and disagreements with the staff and team.

The first of these is one side of the Ambivalence that is natural to the change process. The person is torn between changing and not changing. Sustain talk is an outward sign of not changing similarly to change talk as a sign of moving toward change. Instead of labeling this resistance which puts the blame for not changing on the youth and family we acknowledge this as Ambivalence and a normal part of the change process. The question then becomes how we respond to the sustain talk. First it is important to acknowledge the sustain talk through Reflective Listening to maintain and strengthen Engagement and the Collaborative Partnership. We should use Reflections and questions to acknowledge and understand the source of the sustain talk. Then we will use strategic reflections while emphasizing autonomy to guide the person toward change talk. Recognizing four types of sustain talk and individualizing your approach to each lead to successful guiding.

Reluctance (I don't think it will work) Listen carefully to the "Whys"
Rebellion (I won't) Assure the person that they own the decision
Resignation (What's the point) Lend hope, build Self-efficacy
Rationalization (I know but...) Avoid any form of argumentation

If we subtract sustain talk from what was labeled resistance, what is left resembles disagreement or Discord in the relationship. Discord may be seen through the individual arguing with you, interrupting you, ignoring you or discounting what you say. Discord may occur at the very beginning of the process because the person comes to you angry and defensive or later because of something you do or something that happens. You can't change the starting point but the way you respond can have considerable influence on what happens next. Using your Relational Skills and Reflective Listening you should be able to guide most people through this stage.

MiiWrap Behavior Change Skill # 2

Softening Sustain Talk

HIGHER QUALITY RESPONSE

- ACKNOWLEDGES AND UNDERSTANDS THE SOURCE OF SUSTAIN TALK
- EMPHASIZES AUTONOMY WHILE USING STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS
- TO MOVE TOWARD CHANGE TALK
- PAYS ATTENTION TO THE STAGE OF READINESS TO CHANGE AND RESPONDS ACCORDINGLY

LOWER QUALITY RESPONSE

- BECOMES DEFENSIVE WHEN CONFRONTED
- IGNORES SUSTAIN TALK WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING IT
- TREATS SUSTAIN TALK AND DISCORD AS RESISTANCE FROM THE PERSON
- DEALS WITH ALL TYPES OF SUSTAIN TALK THE SAME WAY

NOTES

- AMBIVALENCE AND SUSTAIN TALK ARE A NORMAL PART OF THE CHANGE PROCESS AND SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED AND NORMALIZED
- PUSHING FORWARD THROUGH SUSTAIN TALK WILL MOST LIKELY STRENGTHEN IT
- DISCORD IS IN THE RELATIONSHIP, COLLABORATIVELY DISCOVER THE SOURCE

IDENTIFYING AND RESOLVING AMBIVALENCE

MiiWrap sees **Ambivalence** as a key for guiding behavioral change. Ambivalence may already exist within a person you are working with or be drawn out by the Staff. Ambivalence is simply **thinking two ways about making a change** and is a natural part of the chance process. For people in the early stages of change creating Ambivalence can be a goal. If we only feel one way about using drugs (it's not a problem), getting a job (why should I work, I am fine), or parenting (I am a great parent, I have no reason to change) then we are not ambivalent. We would much rather work with a person who says, "I don't know, I guess there are some things that I could change... but, I am just not ready to yet." Ambivalence is often at the very heart of our work, and identification and evoking Ambivalence at this stage in the process is a valuable skill. Once Ambivalence is established or already present guiding takes us to the next phase of strengthening Change Talk and softening Sustain Talk. Examples of Ambivalence can be heard in a young person thinking about whether they want to continue attending high school. On one hand, they may be thinking it's a waste of time, and they don't like being told what to do. On the other hand, they may realize that if they do not get a high school diploma, they may not be able to get a good job. They may also miss some of the social parts (I get to see my girlfriend) as well, but dislike most of the other students. These two thoughts stand in opposition to one another and create Ambivalence towards change. MiiWrap Staff would attempt to increase change talk related to staying in school and soften the sustain talk of not attending. We look at all sides of the Ambivalence and attempt to shift it towards positive behavioral change. An important factor is your ability to verbalize an appreciation for ambivalence as a normal part of the person's experience as they consider change. Once the Ambivalence is clearer to you and the youth and family you can use Strategic Reflections, Discrepancies and Decisional Balancing to strengthen change talk and soften sustain talk moving them forward to behavioral change. At this point a summarized strategic reflection may prepare the way for planning. Your goal here is to clarify the person's ambivalence with them. You do not rush through it, but you have the person describe it in detail.

"You feel two ways about this, but I also hear that you would be willing to experiment with some new behavior that might make your life easier for you"

MiiWrap Behavior Change Skill # 3

Resolving Ambivalence

HIGHER QUALITY

- HEARS AMBIVALENCE AS A NORMAL PART OF THE CHANGE PROCESS AND HONORS IT
- CREATES AMBIVALENCE IF NEEDED TO PROMOTE CHANGE
- USES HIGH QUALITY STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS TO MOVE THE PERSON TOWARD CHANGE
- USES DECISIONAL BALANCING OR PROS AND CONS
- DEVELOPS A DISCREPANCY WHEN APPROPRIATE

LOWER QUALITY RESPONSE

- SEES AMBIVALENCE AS A THREAT TO CHANGE
- USES JUDGMENTAL STATEMENTS WHEN CONFRONTING AMBIVALENCE
- FAILS TO IDENTIFY IT AND USE MIIWRAP STRATEGIES TO RESOLVE IT

NOTES

- AMBIVALENCE MAY EXIST, OR YOU MAY NEED TO GUIDE THE PERSON IN CREATING IT
- MIIWRAP SKILLS ARE INTENTIONALLY DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE AMBIVALENCE
- YOUR GOAL IS TO RESOLVE THE AMBIVALENCE IN A DIRECTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGE THAT ALIGNS WITH THE NEED OF THE PERSON

DEVELOPING DISCREPANCIES

The skill of **Developing Discrepancies** can be a powerful strategy in assisting individuals to enhance motivation to change.

Discrepancies are developed through careful listening to the Individual and providing reflections back to them that lead to a collaborative reflective conversation. This means you must evoke the different parts of the discrepancy from the individual and clarify your understanding of each part before you reflect it back. If not, you will fall into the expert trap providing your idea of the discrepancy. At its core, Discrepancies reflect back to the Individual the conflict between their values, goals and beliefs, and their present behavior. Discrepancies can be used to help the Individual see how things were different in the past, or what they might be in the future, if changes are, or are not made. The intent is to create cognitive dissonance with the goal of resolving it in the direction of behavioral change. At the root of dissonance theories is the belief that people strive for consistency between their thoughts, beliefs, values and behaviors. If you can effectively Develop Discrepancy with the people you are working with, they are naturally driven to resolve it.

A Discrepancy is not a “gotcha” approach, nor is its intent to trap the individual in a lie. It is a subtle, sensitive and collaborative way of helping the individual to heighten their awareness of things in their life that are incongruent. You need to avoid the expert trap, but instead take a “one down” approach in the conversation. This one down approach typically sounds like “I am a bit confused here, help me understand what is going on...”

After Developing Discrepancy, the Individual, not the Staff, should present the argument for change. This is an effective and sustainable strategy to build self-motivation and self-efficacy. Examples of the two types are below:

- *On one hand you would really like your step father to get off your back... but on the other hand it's impossible for you to do the things he asks of you*
- *As you look back on your life... was there a time when this didn't happen? or If you make these changes... what does your life look like a year from now?*

HIGHER QUALITY RESPONSE

- DISCREPANCIES SHOULD BE REFLECTIONS OF WHAT THE PERSON HAS SAID
- USED IN CONTEXT OF THE MINDSET AND ALL RELATIONAL SKILLS
- OFFERED IN ONE DOWN FASHION
- EVOKE RESOLUTION FROM THE INDIVIDUAL
- ALLOWS AN EXAMINATION OF GOALS VERSUS CURRENT BEHAVIOR
- ALLOWS THE PERSON TO THINK IT THROUGH

LOWER QUALITY RESPONSE

- HAS A “GOTCHA” FEEL TO THEM
- ARE USED FREQUENTLY
- ARE BASED ON STAFF PERCEPTIONS NOT INDIVIDUAL STATEMENTS
- DOES NOT DEVELOP A DISCREPANCY

NOTES

- DISCREPANCIES ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO CREATING AMBIVALENCE
- DO NOT USE IF THE PERSON IS IN THE STAGE OF PREPARATION OR PLANNING
- THERE SHOULD BE A DOWNWARD TURN IN YOUR VOICE AT THE END TO ENCOURAGE THINKING FROM THE PERSON

STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS

When discussing relational skills, we discussed using reflections for engagement. **Strategic Reflections** are used to promote behavioral change primarily by evoking change talk. They can heighten awareness to improve the possibility of change, move the person forward gently and/or clarify the person's intent. They can be used to put an idea into the person's head by changing the tense, or slightly altering the meaning.

Amplified Reflections take what the client has said and restate it in an exaggerated way (over or under). This encourages the person to argue less and can elicit the other side of the client's Ambivalence.

A **Double-sided Reflection** lets the person hear both sides of their Ambivalence. It is like one of the ways we Develop Discrepancies. We heighten the Ambivalence through this type of statement, as the person hears both sides at once.

Reframing Reflections can be used to engage, but also to guide a person towards change. It is a way to give it back to the person in a new frame. We are not changing the content; we are attempting to get the person to see it differently with the hope that it will motivate them towards change. Often, we are taking something negative, and trying to change it into something that could be positive

Agreeing with a Twist: is when you agree, then change it at the very end to create or increase Ambivalence or motivation. It can be very effective at the Contemplation Stage of Motivation.

Directive Collaborative Reflections: These Reflections were partially based on what the Individual has said but were also formed by the Staff to assist in building Self-Efficacy and Enhancing Motivation. DCR's can implant an idea into the mind of the Individual with the insinuation that they had thought about it or had kind of said it. Most importantly, it is always done with the best interest and in the Voice of the Individual. The outcome of a DCR should be encouraging to the Individual, and they should have an impression that they have somehow said it themselves. If it creates Resistance, you have missed the mark (it will happen at times!) The DCR should come from a spirit of compassion and helping the Individual. When they work well, it's kind of like magic! When they don't work seek help from the person to clarify the meaning.

MiiWrap Behavior Change Skill # 5

Strategic Reflections

HIGHER QUALITY

- USES THE PERSON'S WORDS AS WELL AS KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR STRENGTHS, NEEDS AND CULTURE
- USED TO EVOKE MOBILIZING CHANGE TALK (CAT)
- ARE CLEAR AND SPECIFIC
- ALLOWS THE PERSON TIME TO PROCESS AND RESPOND TO THE REFLECTION
- INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME THE PERSON TALKS

LOWER QUALITY

- SOUNDS SARCASTIC
- HAVE THE FEELING OF TRAPPING THE PERSON
- LONG AND CONFUSING STATEMENTS
- MULTIPLE TOPICS DELIVERED IN ONE PHRASE
- THEY ARE VAGUE AND NOT BEHAVIOR SPECIFIC

NOTES

- LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT THE PERSON IS SAYING SO THAT THE REFLECTIONS HIT HOME
- BE PRECISE IN YOUR WORDS
- YOUR INFLECTION AT THE END TURNS DOWNWARD SO THAT IT AVOIDS SOUNDING LIKE A QUESTION
- YOU PAUSE AND ASSESS THE PERSON'S REACTION AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO RESPOND BEFORE PROCEEDING

GIVING INFORMATION AND SHARING EXPERIENCES

Giving and Sharing Information and personal experiences can be helpful to a person when it is presented in a neutral and non-judgmental manner. During MiiWrap there will be times when sharing information with the youth and family can offer them insights and options that can help them make more informed decisions. This may include information from outside sources (expectations of legal entities, test results, etc.), be options of available resources or supports, or shared experiences from other youth and families in similar circumstance. Before giving information, we seek collaboration to empathize autonomy.

Some examples are:

- *There is some important information that I can share with you that might help you in deciding. Would you like to hear it?*
- Can I share some information with you that has helped others in your situation?
- *I can see that you are concerned about this... I have some thoughts... would you like to hear them?*

The second step is how the information is provided once the person has agreed to hear it. In MiiWrap we are focused on what is important to the youth and family. We do not give them large amounts of information unless it is specifically requested, the information is provided in a neutral way without trying to persuade, advise or warn. On the other hand, providing information, can be an effective behavior change skill. The intent is to provide accurate and important information without increasing Discord in the discussion.

The third step is to elicit their interpretation, understanding and response to the information. This step would include open-ended questions and reflections with a genuine interest in their thoughts. Studies have demonstrated the positive effects of sharing information in a way that increases motivation without shaming. Providing unsolicited information can create Discord. We must also be aware that many times people know the consequences of non-compliance with legal or child welfare issues, but they may lack the kind of information that would be helpful for them to avoid it. A youth may want to leave school but may be unaware of the options that they have to complete school in a non-traditional way. MiiWrap allows the Staff to provide information based on knowledge and personal experience individualized to the person in a way that does not produce fear or Discord but increases their awareness of possible risks and consequences and options and strategies to make successful behavior change of their behavior.

MiiWrap Behavior Change Skill # 6

Giving Information

HIGHER QUALITY RESPONSES

- SEEKS COLLABORATION BEFORE PROVIDING INFORMATION
- PROVIDES THE INFORMATION IN A NEUTRAL MANNER
- DOES NOT WITHHOLD IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR FEAR OF PERSON'S REACTION
- PROVIDES IN A CLEAR AND PRECISE MANNER

LOWER QUALITY RESPONSES

- WARNS THE PERSON THROUGH THE INFORMATION
- HIDES IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE PERSON
- "MAKES UP" INFORMATION TO TRY TO GET THE PERSON TO CHANGE

NOTES

- AVOID BEING "INVESTED" OR BIASED IN SHARING ANY PART OF THE INFORMATION
- REMEMBER THAT THE GOAL IS TO PROMOTE BEHAVIORAL CHANGE
- THE MORE INDIVIDUALIZED IT IS, THE MORE LIKELY IT IS TO GAIN THE ATTENTION AND THEN MOTIVATION OF THE PERSON.

DECISIONAL BALANCING/PROS & CONS

Decisional Balancing is a MiiWrap behavioral strategy to evoke from the person or family some of the good things and some of the not so good things about a behavior change. We have them look at the costs of making and not making a change, and the benefits of making and not making a change. We call the formal version of this skill (where you fill out a form) **Decisional Balancing**, and the informal verbal version, **Pros & Cons**. Traditionally the professional tells the person what the not so good things about their behavior are, in MiiWrap, we evoke it from the person after we hear the goods things. This skill is to be used sparingly as its overuse begins to sound mechanical.

Decisional Balancing is a natural process that we all go through when making decisions. We often decide by weighing the pros and cons of different options. To buy a car now or later, choosing between cars, and deciding on the features we want in a car can all be examples of weighing Pros and Cons. When used with the MiiWrap Mindset, people relate to it as a normal decision-making process. It allows the argument for change to be made by the person in their own words, not from the Staff. It also reduces Discord because the person has been able to talk about what they like about it and create their own argument for change. They may have had thoughts about it, but now it is organized in a manner than can guide change. Decisional Balancing is similar to brainstorming in that the Staff writes down or provides a summary of all of the verbalized thoughts. This is done with the non-judgmental attitude of acceptance. While this exercise can be completed on a piece of paper, in Team or Family work it is more effective if a large easel pad can be utilized, thus allowing everyone present to see the results.

The order of doing Decisional Balancing is important to the result. We start by exploring the positive aspects of not changing. When we begin the conversation with “tell me what you like about your current situation” they are often surprised that we are expressing an interest in understanding their motivation. After summarizing the good things, we ask “For you... are there any not so good things?” While it is a very effective tool for evoking change, it should be used sparingly with the Individual because it is not necessarily part of a normal conversation, thus risking your genuineness.

MiiWrap Behavior Change Skill # 7

Decisional Balancing Pros & Cons

HIGHER QUALITY

- NONJUDGMENTAL APPROACH
- LISTENS CAREFULLY
- ACKNOWLEDGES REASONS TO CHANGE AND NOT TO CHANGE
- USES REFLECTIONS TO UNDERScore IMPORTANT POINTS
- SUMMARIZES AT THE END
- EVOKES THE PERSONS THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RESULTS

LOWER QUALITY

- MAKES JUDGMENTS ABOUT REASONS
- USES THE WORDS “PROS” AND OR “CONS”
- GIVES MORE WEIGHT TO ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER
- DOES NOT ASK CONS
- MINIMAL USE OF REFLECTIONS
- DOES NOT SUMMARIZE AND MOVES TO ANOTHER ACTIVITY

NOTES

- START WITH THE GOOD THINGS ABOUT NOT CHANGING THEN ASK THE NOT SO GOOD THINGS (FROM SUSTAIN TALK TO CHANGE TALK)
- AVOID WORDS THAT INDICATE APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU WOULD SAY “DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT SKIPPING SCHOOL?” NOT “WHAT ARE THE BAD THINGS ABOUT SKIPPING SCHOOL?”
- WE ALWAYS WANT TO END WITH CHANGE TALK

DIFFERENTIALLY RESPONDING TO THE STAGE OF READINESS TO CHANGE

Differential responding is matching the relational and behavior change skills to the current stage of readiness of the youth and family. First, we need to remember that the person's Stage of Readiness is fluid and dynamic. It can not only change from session to session, but it can change during a session. We need to be continually aware of how the person is responding, verbally, and non-verbally. Second, people are not in a stage of change. A person may be in Pre-Contemplation regarding getting a job, in Contemplation regarding drug use, and in Preparation related to resolving their legal issues. In a very real sense, MiiWrap is like a juggling act, with the possibility of having dozens of balls in the air at one time. We address each Need separately and often with unique strategies. When we identify and respond correctly to the person's Stage of Readiness to change, we can expect reduced Discord and increased motivation for change. In a very real sense, MiiWrap is a process of successfully moving someone through the Stages of readiness to change for their prioritized needs.

Responding with a strategy that does not match the stage leads to Discord. If a person is in Precontemplation (they don't even see a problem) and we are trying to develop a plan for their unseen problem, we prompt Discord. If the person is in a place where they are ready to make a change, and we are treating them like a Contemplator (you are just thinking about this) we may also get Discord. In MiiWrap we may stay just a half step ahead of them at the initial phases, join them during the middle phases, and then let them move ahead of us as they build their own transition assets. Our basic strategies based on each stage of readiness are:

- *Precontemplation – use Relational Skills to strengthen Engagement and Change Skills to create Ambivalence*
- *Contemplational – use Relational Skills to strengthen Engagement and Change Skills to Evoke Change Talk*
- *Preparation – use Relational and Change Skills to strengthen Motivation and self-efficacy and develop focus*
- *Planning – continue to strengthen Motivation, self-efficacy and focus and use Change Skills to develop options and mobilizing Change Talk*

MiiWrap Behavior Change Skill # 8

Differentially Responding

HIGHER QUALITY RESPONSES

- IDENTIFY THE STAGE OF READINESS TO CHANGE BEFORE PROCEEDING
- MATCH RELATIONAL AND CHANGE SKILLS TO STAGE
- EVOKE MOVEMENT TOWARD THE NEXT STAGE

LOWER QUALITY RESPONSES

- PRESENT THE NEXT CHANGE ACTIVITY BASED ON THE TIME FRAMES NOT ON STAGE OF READINESS TO CHANGE
- RESPOND WITH STRATEGIES THAT ARE FOR ANOTHER STAGE
- DO NOT ASSESS STAGE OF READINESS FOR EACH BEHAVIOR CHANGE NEED

NOTES

- ASSESS READINESS TO CHANGE FOR EACH BEHAVIOR CHANGE NEED
- ONCE SOME NEEDS ARE AT PREPARATION AND PLANNING MOVE TO ACTION WHILE CONCURRENTLY STRENGTHENING MOTIVATION AND SELF-EFFICACY FOR OTHER NEEDS

SHAPING BEHAVIOR

Shaping is a MiiWrap strategy of breaking large goals into smaller manageable objectives and reinforcing each of the steps to the larger goal. Miller & Rollnick (2013) provide an analogy for moving straight ahead in a forest. Determine the direction you want to travel (Focus) and identify three trees in a line in that direction. Walk toward the first tree (short-term objective) keeping the other trees in view. When you reach the first tree find a fourth tree in line with the second and third and keep repeating the process.

When people identify large or complex behavior change goals, it is unlikely they will be able to accomplish them all at one time. They may lack the Motivation or Self-efficacy, or both, to do so. By helping the individual break the larger goal into smaller steps or short-term objectives, we can help them move toward the larger goal and provide affirmation for change efforts as they complete the smaller steps. This will increase self-efficacy and thus self-motivation to continue the change efforts to accomplish the larger goal.

This is what we do when we affirm increasing amounts and strength of change talk while softening sustain talk to build motivation to support behavior change. We are shaping the behavior by shaping the Change Talk. MiiWrap believes that people are more likely to enter in to behavioral change if they increase their change talk. We follow the idea of Chaining as we link one successful behavioral change to another. Examples of how MiiWrap helps people choose their own steps are listed below:

- *If your mom saw, you begin to make changes... what would be the first thing she would notice had changed?*
- *What would be the first thing that you would do?*
- *If someone saw that things in your life started to change... what would they notice first?*
- *That's a great goal... what would be the first step to achieve it?*
- *On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all confident, and 10 is completely confident, what number would you give yourself to try this in the next week? What makes you that confident? What could we talk about today that might make you a little more confident?*

MiiWrap Behavior Change Skill # 9

Shaping Behavior

HIGHER QUALITY

- THE STAFF EVOKES THE STEPS FROM THE PERSON
- THE STAFF GUIDES THE PERSON IN BREAKING DOWN THE GOAL IN TO MANAGEABLE STEPS
- THE PERSON IS AFFIRMED FOR VERBAL AND BEHAVIORAL EFFORTS
- THE PERSON IS SUPPORTED TO TAKE STEPS THEY SELECT NOT ONES SELECTED FOR THEM

LOWER QUALITY

- THE STAFF DICTATES THE STEPS
- FAILURE TO AFFIRM VERBAL OR LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS
- DOES NOT HELP THE PERSON BREAK DOWN STEPS INTO SMALLER MANAGEABLE ONES

NOTES

- ATTEND TO THE INDIVIDUAL CLOSELY WHEN THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT THE STEPS THEY MAY TAKE
- SCALE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITY TO MAKE THE FIRST STEP
- ASSESS POSSIBLE BARRIERS AND GUIDE THE PERSON TO INCREASE THEIR SKILLS TO OVERCOME THEM

Reflective Discussion

As part of the cycle of support MiiWrap Staff prepares the person for each activity through a **Collaborative Reflective Discussion** about what they are going to do and why. And after each step, we reflect on how it went and possible improvements that might be made in future similar activities. We also consider how the person will accomplish the goal of the activity in the future, when the Individual takes control of the process.

By planning the agenda for each activity and reflecting afterward we get the person more involved and make it a Collaborative Partnership to support the MiiWrap Mindset. When we do this, we give the person more control over the process, so we can expect more from them now and in the future. This builds self-efficacy and moves the person towards transition. The opposite of this is when we do everything for the person, and then they expect us to do everything in the future. This approach fails to build self-efficacy and transition assets. A preparatory reflective discussion describes and collaboratively discusses what we are about to do and why we do it. It is collaborative in that we use Reflective Listening to understand their needs for the session, value on the content of the session or activity, and modify our approach and agenda based on their response. For example,

- Today we have planned to prepare for the SNCD. What do you want from this session and is there anything else we should be talking about?

A debriefing Reflective Discussion involves them directly and gives the person more control over the process. Done effectively, it helps you to identify any barriers to change, and create new plans to address them. We do this to involve them in the collaborative partnership with questions like:

- *How do you think the (session, meeting, etc.) went today?*
- *What about it worked for you?*
- *What did not work or could have been done better?*
- *What are your ideas on how we can do that next time?*
- *How would you handle this situation if I was not here?*

Reflective discussions can also be used to debrief plan implementation or activities in which the Staff did not participate. The entire set of **MiiWrap Relational Skills** can be of great value in this Discussion as the person is sharing their thoughts on what has recently happened. This supports the relationship and collaboration as the person feels heard and supported.

HIGHER QUALITY

- THE STAFF DEMONSTRATES A GENUINE CURIOSITY ABOUT HOW THE PERSON IS EXPERIENCING THE MiiWRAP PROCESS
- AFFIRMS THE PERSON FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION AND EFFORTS
- USES WORDS LIKE “US” AND “WE” DURING THE DISCUSSION TO SUPPORT THE MINDSET OF COLLABORATION
- HONORS THE PERSON’S OPINION ABOUT THE PROCESS
- SUPPORTS THE PERSON’S CONTROL OVER THE PROCESS

LOWER QUALITY

- CONTROLS THE DISCUSSION
- FORCES THE DISCUSSION
- MAKES ATTEMPT TO FIX THINGS THAT WENT WRONG WITHOUT HONORING THE VOICE OF THE PERSON

NOTES

- DE-CLUTTER YOUR MIND, REMOVE YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT THE PERSON IS SAYING FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW
- ASSESS POSSIBLE BARRIERS AND GUIDE THE PERSON TO INCREASE THEIR SKILLS TO OVERCOME THEM
- USE YOUR RELATIONAL SKILLS
- USE YOUR CHANGE SKILLS TO STRENGTHEN MOTIVATION TO DO THE MiiWRAP ACTIVITIES