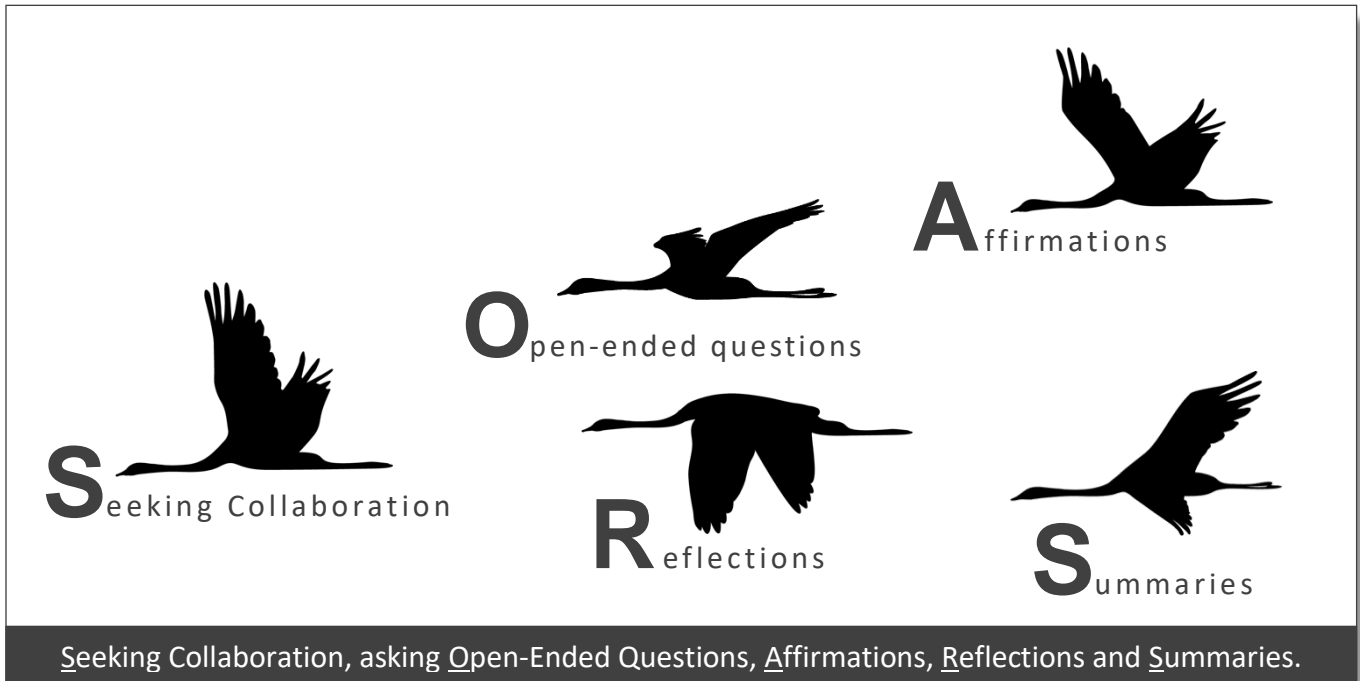


MiiWrap Relational Skills (SOARS)

Coaching Sheets



The MiiWrap Relational skills are communication strategies to build, strengthen and sustain Engagement and the Collaborative Partnership. First, to demonstrate the nature of the partnership, you **Seek Collaboration** by sharing control of the conversation and process. You use **Open-Ended Questions** to get the youth and families talking so that you they share control of the conversational content and direction, use **Affirmations** to acknowledge strengths and accomplishments in order to strengthen Self-Efficacy, **Reflections** to show general interest and understanding and guide the conversation indirectly, and **Summaries** to ensure understanding and allow transition to new topics. The following Coaching worksheets provide some specific information about each of these relational skills.

MiiWrap Relational Skills

Seeking Collaboration	Seeking Collaboration is a Relational Skill to invite the person into the partnership. Seeking Collaboration is an overt effort to share power and support active partnership level participation from the youth and family.
Open Ended Questions	Open-ended questions are questions that encourage the person to reply with more than a yes or no or a limited range response. The goal is to get the person to talk more, control the direction of the answers and conversation and provide a wider range of responses.
Affirmations	Affirmations recognize and acknowledge strengths and efforts. Affirmations when provided genuinely and honestly support and encourage these strengths and efforts thus reinforcing self-efficacy and in turn motivation.
Reflections	Reflective Listening may be your most powerful relational skill. The primary way we show Individuals that we are listening is through the effective use of Reflections. Quality Reflections occur when the Staff identifies the essential meaning of what the Individual has said and reflects it back in terms easily understood.
Summarizing	In MiiWrap Summarizing is a special form of Reflecting in which you draw the threads of the conversation together. Summaries can be used to collect the threads of an extended conversation (even over sessions) to put them together and check your understanding.



Seeking Collaboration

Partnership is the second aspect of the MiiWrap Mindset. It is not something done by an expert to a passive recipient. It is not done “to” or “on” someone but is done “for” and “with” the youth and family. MiiWrap is not a way of making people change but is a way of activating their own motivation and resources for change.

Seeking Collaboration is a Relational Skill to invite the person into the partnership. Many of the people who enter into MiiWrap will have already experienced multiple expert service relationships. Seeking Collaboration is an overt effort to share power and support active partnership level participation from the youth and family. Acceptance involves honoring and respecting each person’s autonomy, their irrevocable right and capacity for self-direction. Seeking Collaboration reinforces acceptance. Seeking Collaboration supports Engagement, partnership and purposeful transition.

Seeking Collaboration is done to:

- Jointly plan the content and approach to interactions and activities
- To genuinely seek consensus on needs, tasks, goals and direction
- To ask permission to give information or share experiences before providing them
- To ask for feedback on information
- To debrief the results and process of an activity with a genuine interest in their input and ways to improve the process

High Quality Seeking Collaboration

- Genuinely seeks and listens to the ideas and feedback from the youth and family
- Provides pauses for Reflection and response
- Reflects on their response to explore their response more deeply
- Affirms feedback to improve the process

Lower Quality Seeking Collaboration

- Is perfunctory and slanted to get positive responses
- Does not explore the youth and families experience

Notes

- Seeking collaboration is critical to establishing a partnership relationship
- Listen carefully to responses to seeking collaboration so you can respond and support the person’s place in the partnership



MiiWrap Relational Skill #2

Open Ended Questions

Open Ended Questions

Open-ended questions are questions that encourage the person to reply with more than a yes or no or a limited range response. The goal is to get the person to talk more and provide a wider range of responses. Many times, these questions begin with “What,” “How,” “In what,” and “Why” or lead off with the request, “Tell me...” or “Describe...” Open ended questions allow us to hear the person’s point of view about a topic. MiiWrap uses open-ended questions to encourage the person to expand on their view of their situation and commitment to change. By using open-ended questions, you guide the youth or family to do most of the talking.

Open ended questions make the conversation more collaborative by giving the youth and family more control over both the content and direction of the conversation. This helps you discover more information and gain a better understanding of their perception of the issue. Open-ended questions prompt people to discuss their ideas about areas of possible need, levels of motivation to make change, attempts or change efforts, and plans to make changes. In brief, by using open-ended questions, you give the person a wide latitude for discussing his or her life circumstances as a partner in the conversation.

Open-Ended Questions build and strengthen engagement and reduce Discord. By encouraging people to discuss the things that are important to them and pairing these questions with nonjudgmental Reflective Listening and Affirmations, you demonstrate your genuine curiosity and accepting empathy. This communicates genuine interest in the person and an expectation and an opportunity for people to self-disclose. High quality open-ended questions move the conversation in the direction of change talk. The example below compares closed ended questions to Open ended ones.

- *Do you have children? (closed)*
Tell me about your family? (open)
- *Do you use drugs? (closed)*
Tell me about your experiences with drugs? (open)
- *Have you been involved with child before? (closed)*
Tell me about your experiences with child welfare? (open)

Higher Quality Questions

- *Are nonjudgmental and show genuine curiosity about their experiences*
- *Are relevant to conversation (what went on before)*
- *End with a pause to allow the person to reflect and answer*
- *Are interspersed with Reflections to show interest in their answers*
- *Guide the conversation toward Change Talk*

Lower Quality Questions

- *Appear to be leading to expected answers*
- *Jump from topic to topic instead of flowing from the person’s answer*
- *Are more focused on your agenda than showing genuine curiosity about their experience*

Notes

- *Avoid a mechanical sound to your questions*
- *Do not ask them question after question but intersperse reflections*
- *Ask questions that allow for in depth exploration of the persons situation and perception of it*



MiiWrap Relational Skill #3

Affirmations

Affirmations

Affirmations accentuate the positive. To affirm is to recognize and acknowledge strengths including the individual's inherent worth as a fellow human being. Affirmation when provided genuinely and honestly support and encourage these strengths thus building self-efficacy and in turn motivation to be better.

Affirmations include acknowledging the person's strengths. Strengths include abilities, interests, accomplishments, supports, change talk and change efforts. Affirmations verbally support any move taken in the direction of change or acknowledging personal qualities that might facilitate successful efforts to change. You can improve the person's confidence by sincerely complimenting, acknowledging, and validating the individual's strengths, you foster the belief in the individual's strengths and thus self-efficacy. Some examples of this type of affirmations include:

"You have been thinking about this for a long time"

"You made the appointment and you feel you are moving forward"

"You got your homework in 4 times this week and are proud of your progress"

"You changed your approach with Alice and although it didn't work as you expected you feel good about trying something else next time."

By affirming and validating the person, you foster the person's belief and hope for successful change. When you affirm true (non-flattering) strengths, it increases the strength of the relationship and hope for success strengthens engagement in the process.

While affirming can be a powerful way to increase engagement, self-efficacy and motivation, they need to be genuine and not merely **"cheerleading."** People sense when we are artificial or superficial and you risk losing engagement when you do this. If we think about a person who has been an absent father, a low-quality affirmation would state that he is *"a great father."* In reality, the affirmation might sound more like *"you really would like to have a better relationship with your son, you are just not sure where to start."*

Higher Quality

- *Are genuine, thoughtful and specific to the current conversation or situation*
- *Focus on the youth or family not your perception of the youth or family ("you tried hard" not "I see you tried hard")*
- *Reframe the person's perceptions to bring out the positive aspects*
- *Focus on possibilities and change talk*

Lower Quality

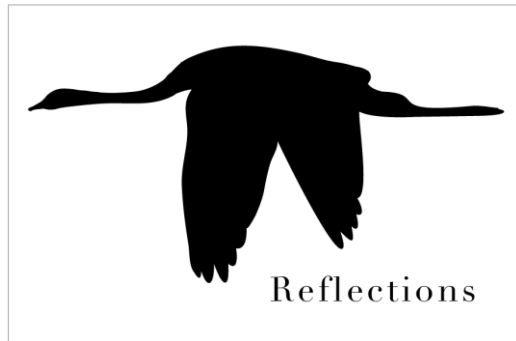
- *Affirmations are generalized and not attached to a specific conversation or behavior*
- *Affirmations are done in a knee jerk fashion*
- *Affirmations are made in a "righting" fashion to buoy the person*
- *They appear to be insincere to the person*

Notes

- *Link the Affirmations to a specific thing that was said or done by the person*
- *Affirm all attempts at change not just the successful ones*
- *Avoid using Affirmations to falsely buoy the person*

MiiWrap Relational Skill #4

Reflections



Reflections

We have asked Individuals over the years what they have found most helpful about MiiWrap. One of the most frequent response is: “the Staff **listened to me.**” Reflective Listening may be your most powerful relational skill. The primary way we show Individuals that we are listening is through the effective use of Reflections. Quality Reflections occur when the Staff identifies the essential meaning of what the Individual has said and reflects it back in terms easily understood. Reflections should “tail down” at the end, assuring the Individual that it is not a question. At the same time the Staff should encourage the Individual to respond to the reflection. This maintains the flow of the conversation and builds understanding by allowing the person to tell you if you have understood what they are saying. Well-delivered reflections are concise and clear. Typically, good reflections increase the time spent talking by the Individual, foster a collaborative tone, and reduce discord. Reflecting especially reframed reflections can demonstrate your empathy for the person and their situation. Empathy is seeking to understand and accept the individual and their view of their situation and goals. Often Empathetic Reflections contain a “feeling” word such as *happy, sad, frustrated, etc.*

Higher Quality Reflections

- *Grasp the essential meaning of what the person has said*
- *Are simple and clear*
- *Turn down at the end to avoid sounding like a question*
- *Increase the amount of time that the individual spends talking*
- *Allow enough time for the person to think and then respond*

Lower Quality

- *Fail to reflect the content of what the person has said*
- *Change the meaning in a way that creates Discord*
- *Do not allow enough time for a response from the person*
- *They are long and complicated and convey multiple thoughts*

Notes

- *Do not underestimate the power of high-quality reflections to impact the relationship with the person*
- *Avoid the “it is simple” trap. Providing high quality reflections is a skill that can be hard at first. Don’t fall back into a series of questions.*

MiiWrap Relational Skill #4

Reflections



Types of Reflections

The basic types of MiiWrap Reflections are:

- **Simple Reflections** mirror back the words or part of the words of the Individual. They make no attempt to alter the meaning or create new insight.
- **Rephrasing** as a type of Reflection stays close to what the Individual said but substitutes a few words or phrases with no intent of changing the meaning. This avoids the appearance of being a parrot and is thus a higher quality reflection.
- **Reframing**, as a Reflection seeks more from the statement. It is often a best guess at the unstated and goes beyond the superficial language used. Reframing Reflections are typically an empathetic guess at what the person is not saying and seeks a deeper understanding of the person's point of view. Quality Reflections prompt the individual to expand on their statements or clarify things you don't understand. Quality Reflections can prompt the person to consider their perception of the topic and may prompt impaired self-awareness.

For example, a youth might say, "this was one of the worst days of my life."

Response by Simple Reflection – This is repeating back to the person all or part of what they have said. It doesn't change the meaning but is a basic form of reflection. You might say:

"This has been one of the worst days of your life."

Response by Rephrasing – You use different words, but don't change the meaning. It's a higher form of Reflection and prevents you from sounding like a parrot! An example is:

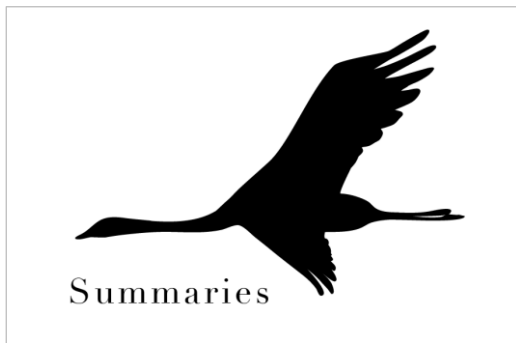
"It's been a horrible day for you. You never want to go through something like that again."

Response by Reframing – Try to change the words in such a way that it increases insights into the person's Motivation. This requires listening very closely, and at times you'll have to make a guess at what was said, such as:

"You've had a really tough day, you didn't like it at all, but you're surprised that you got through it... using all of the energy and skills that have actually worked for you."

Reflections, especially Reframed Reflections, can demonstrate your empathy for the person and their situation. As we've discussed, empathy is:

- ▶ Seeking to understand the youth and family and their view of their situation and goals
- ▶ Communicating that interest and the understanding back to the youth and family.
- ▶ Putting yourself in the shoes of the youth and family, and often encouraging collaboration to understand more deeply.



MiiWrap Relational Skill #5

Summarizing

Higher Quality

- Summarize the major points the person made
- States points in a clear and concise manner
- Only summarizes when there is a need for clarification, when moving to a new topic, or closing a session
- Allows the person to check to see the Staff has it right

Lower Quality Summaries

- Fail to reflect the content of what the person has said
- Are used to frequently add information not provided by the person that is not relevant to the conversation
- Are done without Seeking Collaboration and clarification

Notes

- Gauge the frequency that you use Summaries so as not to appear disingenuous
- Use the Mindset of genuine curiosity to guide your summaries
- Always check with the person to see if you have it right before moving on

Summarizing

In MiiWrap Summarizing is a special form of Reflecting in which you draw the multiple thoughts and statements of the conversation together. Summaries can be used to **collect the threads** of an extended conversation (even over sessions) to put them together and check your understanding. Summaries can also be used to transition to a new topic or to end a session. Summaries lets the Individual know that you have captured their thoughts along the way. A quality summary contains the highlights of the discussion and is given back to the person with the preface "I would like to see if I can capture what we have been talking about" and ends with "does that sound right to you?" A well worded summary also acts as a guide to where you and the person are going next.

William Miller has described Summaries as a process where the person hands you flowers one at a time and then you gather them together, arrange them in a bouquet and give them back to the person.

Summarizing helps to ensure that there is clear communication between the person and the Staff. It then becomes a stepping stone towards behavioral change. Effective Summaries have a specific structure to them.

- You start with a statement that lets the person know what you are doing. It often sounds like:
 - *I would like to know if I have understood what you have been saying so far...*
 - *Let me see if I can summarize what we have been talking about*
 - *Before we move on I would like to make sure that I have heard you right*
- We then Summarize our understanding for the person
- Next, we check with the person to see if we heard them correctly
 - *Does that sound right to you?*
 - *Did I miss anything?*

Summaries allow us to build engagement, and then move to a new topic or close the session.