

Worksheet of Client Strengths for Exercise 4.4

Example: *A recent heart attack victim continues to eat high-fat foods.*

Strength: *Determination to make his own decisions.*

Expression? *Resists changing behavior when his physician tells him that he must change his eating habits or face another heart attack.*

Helps how? *Allows him to maintain some control in a situation that may feel out of control. Provides a sense of integrity. Consistent with values.*

Affirmation? *You're not somebody who does something just because somebody says you must. You have to decide if it is right for you, and sometimes this means standing against some pretty formidable pressure.*

(Copy as needed for different situations.)

Your client's situation:

Strength(s):

Expression of these strengths?

Helps how?

Affirmations?

Strength(s):

Expression of these strengths?

Helps how?

Affirmations?

This is the same dialogue used in Exercise 5.1. This time focus on the practitioner's behavior. After each practitioner statement, answer the questions. Then write down another response that you might have used instead. Finally, check the key for some commentary.

Exercise 5.4, Scenario 1 (Marijuana)

This is a young adult male, coming to treatment for a possible substance abuse issue, at the behest of his parents.

P: Let me summarize what we've talked about so far. About 8 months ago you had a pretty serious cancer scare. You took some time off for chemotherapy and for awhile your life plans were put on hold. You're basically doing OK now; the cancer is in remission, and you're trying to get on with your life. Prior to this diagnosis you'd been in school—with kind of mixed results—but you were figuring out what was required of you to be successful, including smoking a little less pot. Your plan is to go back this fall. You also decided that for now you'll stay at home to help cover costs, but this also means that you have to follow your parents' rules, which is causing some friction. Did I miss anything?

What potential avenues does the summary open for exploration? If you chose to reconfigure this summary, what would you do? What other approaches might you use?

Example: There are the openings around what was causing trouble at school as well as the friction at home. Also possible is an exploration of fears around the cancer and how smoking may fit with being healthy. Here is one approach:

"It's been a rough few months, especially with your parents. How's pot smoking fit into the rough patch with them?"

C: No.

P: Now, I understand that one of your parents' concerns is pot smoking, and they've laid down the law about that with you. Tell me about that.

(cont.)

What does the practitioner do? What is done that lessens the likelihood of resistance? What would be another way to approach this area?

C: Well, what do you want to know about it?

P: What's been happening with the pot smoking? What's making your parents concerned? That sort of thing . . .

What happens with the client? What does the practitioner do in response? What might have been an alternative approach?

C: Well, I didn't drink or smoke pot until I was a senior in high school. Then I started drinking about halfway through the year—you know, going out on weekends, partying with friends. Then I started smoking some pot. At first, it was the same way—just weekends—but then I started doing it most every day. It was safer than drinking and driving. Pretty soon I decided I'd better start cutting back, so I tried that. Then I decided to stop for awhile, and I did a couple of times for a month or two, then I tried to smoke just socially, but that didn't work very well. Then I got sick and so I didn't do anything for awhile, but now it started again. So, when my parents said I could smoke once a week I was a little surprised, but I also know it won't work for me. I can't smoke socially. I need to stop entirely, so that's what I'm doing. I haven't smoked in about a week.

P: You're pretty clear that this is something that needs to change and, in fact, you were already picking up on this back in high school.

The practitioner chooses a reflective response. Why is that? What's another reflective listening response you might have given?

C: Shortly after high school.

P: How about the drinking? Where do you stand with that now?

What does the practitioner do here? Is this a problem? Why or why not? If you were to choose one of the other strategies for eliciting change talk, what would you choose and why? How would you do it?

C: Well, I plan to continue drinking, but I'm not going to pick up where the smoking left off. My drinking has never been like my pot smoking. I never did it every day or anything. I mean, occasionally we'd go out. And I work at a restaurant and so we have a couple of drinks after work sometimes, and I don't see anything wrong with that.

P: OK. So you are clear that the smoking needs to change—and I'd still like to hear a little more about what led you to that decision—but you're not so sure that the drinking needs to change.

This is a complex reflection. What other strategies might you use in this situation to elicit change talk? Provide an example of what you would say.

C: Yeah, it's just not that big of a deal.

P: It's not much of a thing.

What is the practitioner doing with this reflection? How might you do the same thing, but with different words?

C: Right. Let me summarize what we've talked about so far. You ...

Write a summary that you feel would emphasize his interest in change.

Double-Sided and Amplified Reflections in Response to Resistance and Status Quo Talk

EXERCISE 6.2

Now use a double-sided (DS) or amplified (A) reflection. Remember, double-sided reflections include both sides of the ambivalence, whereas amplified reflections add some zing to the resistant part of the statement. Try to write one of each type. Use the handout, Techniques for Responding to Resistance, as a reminder if you need it.

I thought red wine was supposed to be good for your heart. That's why I drink it each night.

1. DS—

2. A—

I know it would be good for me, but it's just too hard to exercise regularly. I'm too busy.

1. DS—

2. A—

I think everyone is blowing this out of proportion. So I drank a little too much at the holiday party.

1. DS—

2. A—

I agree it's not perfect, but you don't understand what it's like. It's different now.

1. DS—

2. A—

(cont.)

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Double-Sided and Amplified Reflections in Response to Resistance and Status Quo Talk (p. 2 of 2)

OK, so there are some costs. I'm not someone who wants to spend the rest of my life coloring inside the lines. I want to have a little fun and spend a little money.

1. DS—

2. A—

I don't think the meds helped all that much, and I really didn't like the way they made me feel.

1. DS—

2. A—

Listen, I know my boss is mad. Still, I'm not going to take any crap from anybody. You show weakness here, and you'll get eaten alive.

1. DS—

2. A—

I tried all of those things, and none of them worked. Don't you get it?

1. DS—

2. A—

Why do I have to be here? I know things aren't perfect, but I am doing better. There have been no incidents with my kids, so why do you still make me come?

1. DS—

2. A—