EMPATHIZING   **CONNECTING**   **ELICITING**   **EVOKING**   **COLLABORATING**

NONVERBAL EMPATHY

Eye Contact	The strongest non-verbal empathic communication technique, especially in the context of an initial connection
Smile	The primary way we communicate goodwill to another
Handshake	While a handshake is culturally variable, research has consistently demonstrated a preference for handshake is strong, in terms of showing empathy
Mirroring posture & expression	Sitting if another is sitting; standing if they are standing; squarely shoulders to face one another. Match facial expression to another

VERBAL EMPATHY

Normalizing	Letting someone know they aren't pathologic or alone; assuring commonality ('relapse is so common'; 'we all struggle with honesty at times')
Acknowledging	Specifically, acknowledging feelings. Reflecting back specific feelings that have been stated ('you're feeling really overwhelmed'), stating feelings that might be shown yet unspoken ('this is super frustrating for you'), or summarizing ('that sounds so hard').
Affirming	Noticing and articulating specific strengths ('I'm so impressed at the effort you put into this'; 'I so appreciate your honesty')
Non-judgement	Explicitly assuring non-judgment ('I want to let you know I'm not judging you')

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

'How'; 'What' and 'Tell me more about…'	The gold standard of communication. At least a 3-1 ratio is recommended (3 open needed questions for every 1 closed question). Open-ended questions don't have limited outcomes or agendas. Avoid starting questions with 'why'.

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Exact Words	Using a few important words or a phrase that the other person used; remember no inflection at the end, just a statement *('it feels like things never work out'; 'you're sick of this place')*
Summary	Summarizing longer monologues *('It seems like you've had a really tough year, with a lot of losses')*
Double-sided Reflection	Capturing both sides of someone's ambivalence *('On one hand you really want to attend AA, on the other hand, you don't know how you'd find the time, or if it would even work'.)*

ACKNOWLEDGE AUTONOMY

Affirm Agency	If autonomy is threatened, even subtly, we begin to resist. We can assure autonomy by stating it directly *('It is your choice'; 'it is totally your decision'; 'whatever you think is best')*

ASSESS CONVICTION *(Belief that change is needed)*

Using a Scaling Question	Using a 10-point scale, where 1 is low and 10 is high. The scale can measure desire to change, or how much of a problem someone thinks something is. *('On a scale of 1-10, if 1 is your weight isn't a problem at all, and 10 means your weight is the biggest problem you have, where are you?')*
Using open-ended questions	*'How do you feel about your weight?' or 'Tell me a little about how you feel about your alcohol use?'*

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INCREASING CONVICTION *(Belief that change is needed)*

Strengthening the Relationship	This is the most important intervention when conviction is low. Double down on all empathy techniques, focus on building the relationship *('I appreciate your willingness to talk to me about this, and I respect your honesty. It must be difficult to have others pushing you to come today')*
Amplify Slivers of Change Talk	Listen closely for the smallest statements about problems with how things are, or thoughts about changing. When heard, reflect the statement back, and encourage exploration *('your hate how expensive cigarettes have become. Tell me more about that....')*
Roll with Resistance	Avoid arguing at all costs. Avoid 'righting' or correcting others (letting others know they are wrong) opposing or continuing with a subject when the other person has indicated they do not want to continue discussing.
Ask Permission to follow up	Inquire about future contact, and permission to ask about the issue at hand *('I'm wondering if it is okay if I ask about this again when you come in next time?)'*
Provide information (Ask, Ask, Tell, Ask)	Ask what they already know; Ask for permission to give information; Tell most important pieces of information (keep it short); Ask what the other person thought of it.

ASSESSING CONFIDENCE *(How likely success seems)*

Using a Scaling Question	Using a 10-point scale, where 1 is low and 10 is high. *('On a scale of 1-10, if 1 is your so hard it basically seems impossible, and 10 is so easy you could do it immediately, with no problem at all, where are you with this goal?')*
Use open-ended questions	'How hard or easy do you think this goal will be?' or 'How likely do you think it is that you will be successful with this goal?'

INCREASING CONFIDENCE *(How likely success seems)*

Review past experiences of success	Elicit past experiences when the other person has been successful in making a difficult change; encourage exploration and examination of the experiences.
Define small steps that are likely to lead to success questions	Baby steps are the key to success. Eliciting steps so small, that success is ensured. The other person always needs to set the goal *(calling the gym for prices is a small step. Losing 2 pounds a week is not. Walking to the mailbox once a week is a small step. Exercising for 20 minutes 5 days a week is not.)*
Identify barriers and problem solve	Asking *'what might get in the way of meeting your goal?'* or another open-ended question to assess barriers, then asking *'what are your thoughts about how to address this?'* to facilitate problems solving. It is important that the other person identifies the barriers and does the problem solving.

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