

# Motivational Interviewing Skills: O.A.R.S.

## Open-ended questions

- These are questions that do not result in a yes/no answer.
- Closed-ended questions start with: Did/Is/Are, Will/Would (\*When/who are closed, but may be necessary for gathering info)
- Open-ended questions often start with: How, what, tell me more, say more about that...and sometimes \*why\* (“why” can sometimes sound judgmental)

*“What helps you feel calmer?”*

*“Tell me about how it’s going with work lately.”*

## Affirmations

- Show support for an idea
- Show appreciation for something someone did
- Affirm someone’s character/strengths
- Give credit for small steps

*“I know it’s easier to just forget about it, so I really appreciate you coming in to talk.”*

*“That’s great that you stuck it out even though you had to wait a long time.”*

## Reflective listening or Reflections

- Reflections are a way to show you’re listening
- Make you’re both on the same page
- Give the person a chance to be heard, rather than trying to solve their problem yourself

*“Every time someone mentions your situation, it just reminds you that you don’t have a job.”*

*“On the one hand, you feel like you are doing pretty well and getting things done, but on the other hand, you recognize that your mood is down and your family is concerned about you.”*

## Summaries

- A way to bring everything together and make sure you’ve heard everything that was important
- Clarifies each person’s goals and follow up

*“I want to make sure I got everything important...does that sound right?”*

*“So, for you, these are some of the reasons to change and these are some of the obstacles...”*

*“I want to make sure I understand all the factors pushing you towards a decision...”*

