

Quality Improvement Extras, Season 1, Episode 1: Motivational Interviewing

Speaker 1 (00:02):

And this was a really great quote that we found early in the vaccination, um, approach. And this was from the New York Times back, way back in March of 2021, um, when nursing homes were just rolling out the vaccinations. But it really stood out to us and still stands out to me, um, as a reason as to why it's so important to take this collaborative approach versus a forceful approach with people. And Tina Sandra was an administrator who had really early success early on, and she acknowledged that beliefs change with time or new knowledge. So, we have to write it out. You have to listen hard. Don't judge and let them move at their own pace. It's important to take that time to go at that slower pace. 'Cause think about any time you've changed your mind on anything. Was it because somebody forced information on you, told you to do it?

Speaker 1 (00:48):

Or was it because you had a good conversation, thought about it overnight for a couple days, and then came to your own decision based on your own values and motivation? I would probably say more likely than not, you felt way more comfortable with the latter. And that's really what motivational interviewing is all about. You're working with people, um, together with them and you're trying to draw out their ideas and motivations as well. You're trying to figure out what are their values, what are their commitments, and while still honoring their autonomy. All right, so let's talk about some principles of, uh, motivational interviewing before we go through some tips that might be able to help you out. So, empathy first and foremost, is an important principle of motivational interviewing. Um, say you're setting up a time to talk with a staff member about whether or not they can get the booster.

Speaker 1 (01:31):

You just think about what it's like to be them, not just in their role at the facility, but what's their home life like, et cetera. What kind of person is it? Think about what it's like to work and, and live in their, in their shoes. And that can really go a long way to helping a person feel like they're being heard and understood in a conversation. Uh, the second part here is supporting self-efficacy. Um, similar to how, you know, we feel more comfortable when we can come to the change decisions ourselves. Our ability to actually do things is also a big, uh, motivator for change. So, if they've got successes, if they've got skills and strengths, highlight those, those are things that can help people feel better, um, about making these decisions. So, for example, say they've got a lot of research on the vaccines, that's a strength to use that, um, in your conversation and come to some sort of shared agreement on where things are going with that. Really support, um, what good things they can already do.

Speaker 1 (02:24):

And then, roll with resistance. You know, talk a lot about change, but people are often adverse to change no matter who you are. So, conflict is almost inevitable with this. Um, and if you're having a conversation, if you're deciding to use motivational interviewing, it's not a power struggle. And I like this quote, "it's a conversation dance, not a conversation wrestle." And if you find yourself starting to feel those emotions, you want to argue, and that's where you as sort of the interviewer, need to take a step back, take a deep breath, um, and, and try to, you know, maybe alter your approach. Then, the last one's really important. Um, one, you want to be very open about this being a change conversation with the person you're speaking with. I think that transparency is

important. Um, but think about discrepancies and what that really means is do you see a conflict between somebody's values and goals and their current behavior choice?

Speaker 1 (03:13):

Um, that's often the crux of when we make a change. We say, Hey, I'm doing this one thing right now, but it doesn't really align with what I want in the long term. So, what again, is the goal? So, motivational interviewing, when you're talking to somebody now you really want to start listening for certain things. Change talk versus sustained talk. Um, you want to ask questions and explore when you start hearing some of this idea around change talk. So, what might you hear? Um, you might hear somebody saying, "I want to do something. I would like to, I wish I could, I might be able to." So, when somebody's saying that, they're starting to explore their ideas of change, um, and that's what you want to start asking questions around. And if you're starting to hear things like, yeah, but you get a polite yes, but it's really a no, um, you get an angry no sometimes, which is, you know, understandable.

Speaker 1 (04:01):

And one thing you really want to do, because again, you don't want to be authoritative. You don't want to be confrontational or argumentative, but you also want to recognize that you might have a righting reflex. And what is that? Um, it's our own personal desire to correct what we think is wrong and help people's, um, keep away from harm. It's almost that feeling we all get where you just want to fix the person you see the right way. You think you want to do it, and you see somebody doing it wrong, and you just want to fix it. And oftentimes, it's really rooted in good intentions. It's not necessarily bad, but kind of like what this cartoon is. You know, it's got this, this elephant's got this superhero cape on, they're trying to do the right thing, but that's a big lumbering animal that just once it's, you know, set up, it's not going to be able to change its direction, um, very fast and you can kind of visualize it's probably going to crash land and cause a lot of damage.

Speaker 1 (04:48):

Um, and the way you can kind of figure out if this is happening or not is when you're having a conversation about safe vaccinations or anything else you're trying to, to, you know, facilitate change with, are you feeling that you're working way too hard at it? That might be a really good indicator that you're kind of falling into this, this righting reflex. You might just want to take a step back, take a pause, and maybe just ask a question and just listen at that point. So, what are some skills you can practice? We've talked a little bit about the definition, the principles behind it, um, but what can you do to actually practice this? So, first and foremost, I think the most important thing is to ask open-ended questions. Um, you don't want to ask yes/nos. You really want to engage in conversation and get and be able to listen to what people are saying.

Speaker 1 (05:30):

You want to listen to understand, and you want to try to just continue that listening and not respond too much. Um, but open-ended questions might start with like, how or what do you think or what can you do—those things that really cause people to expand on their responses. Third, really important too: reflective listening. You want to explore, you know, some of the ideas that you're hearing. So, for example, this first quote is really good. It sounds like you have concerns about the, the vaccine safety. What have you been hearing that really does a nice job of opening up the conversation? So, it's not like a a one-up situation. You're trying to say, you know this, but I know

this. That kind of takes away from the argumentative side of things and you can say, I'm interested in how you see the positives and negatives really exploring, um, where this, these beliefs, um, come from.

Speaker 1 (06:18):

And I think that's a really positive way to even just, you know, kind of bridge the gap between differences and ideas and opinions. This fourth one is really, really important. So, I said before, motivational interviewing is not just, you know, authoritative information giving. You know, you're not just throwing information at people, so you want to provide information, but you want to do it with permission. Um, people will just be much more welcoming and maybe they just don't want at that point too. So, you're honoring their wishes at that point as well. So, you may just ask the simple question, could I share some information with you based on what you just shared? Um, and don't forget to explore their response, whether it's a "yes" or a "no," but I think that permission to provide that information is such a key component of this, um, because somebody might just not be ready and if you give it too soon, they're just going to push back on it.

Speaker 1 (07:07):

Then, the last one's also extremely important. Summarize the conversation. 'Cause again, you're being very open and transparent that this is all about change. Um, you're not trying to be, um, subversive with this and you also want to show that you were listening and you understand where people are coming from. So, by summarizing the conversation at the end, you know, you really are communicating that you listened and you understood what the person in front of you said, including any important elements of the discussion. So, maybe they talked about their family and their concerns there. Talk about that. Then, the last part of the summary is make sure you shift in the direction of exploring any possible change. Because again, that's the purpose of this. You're trying to help the person understand, you know, the benefits of that potential change that they're going to make in their lives.

Speaker 1 (07:50):

So, maybe it's just as simple as, hey, do you want to have another follow up meeting with me? Or, Hey, I heard like you're open to having some information and can I share this with you? And then maintain the trust with that person. So, here's some helpful tips just to think about too. Um, and I'm sure a lot of us have seen this, whether it's a vaccination talk or just other aspects of our lives, but a person might blurt out a big statement just to get us to react. Um, and in this one, you're really trying. You have to be measured. That can be very, very tough, especially with something as passionate about what does vaccines. You need to be measured and non-reactive. You're the leader in this situation and this person is taking the time out of their day to talk to you about something you feel is important.

Speaker 1 (08:32):

So, just take that measured approach and try not to get that reaction. Um, just, you know, recognize that it can happen, but don't let it come out. Don't challenge against misinformation. That's where you can start asking those types of questions of like, where did you get this information? What are the positives and negatives and future can start asking those types of open-ended questions. But just don't say somebody's wrong because one, you might not know that they're wrong. They could be right, right about something. And so that's also honoring the information and the research that they've done. I've talked about this before, but authority plus information equals reactive. So again, that ability to ask permission to share, um, being collaborative over dictatorial. You know, I'm sure we've

all felt that feeling when somebody just throws something at us and says, do it. Your body just almost immediately reacts in a negative way with that.

Speaker 1 (09:19):

So, again, if you're showing that empathy, that other person might feel the same way based on how you're sharing information. So, think about how you deliver that. Um, give the person space to express themselves. Um, I've done this a number of times. I'm sure we've all done this too, but maybe you're having a really good conversation or you ask a good question, somebody responds a little bit and there's a bit of a pause. I often might see that gap and start talking again. But in reality, that might be an opportunity where they're trying to express themselves even more. So, think about your timing and giving that person the space when you're talking to them. And if you're going to have these conversations, you just have to accept that this is the fact of change. Always thank the person for their discussion because again, they're taking the time out of their day to talk to you about an idea that you have, um, to make change or make their lives better.

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