
Coercive Control Domestic Abuse: Advocacy Interviewing



CC / DA Advocacy Interviewing

Addresses the skills and procedures needed to develop an appropriate advocacy plan for clients. Provides a balanced, informative data base to use in advocacy planning. Special emphasis is given to clients determining best options for their marriages/relationships.



Advocate's Posture

- ❖ Hold sacred space
- ❖ Be non-judgmental
- ❖ Validate the survivor's experience
- ❖ Equip/Empowerment to help her
- ❖ Make decisions
- ❖ Make conscious choices
- ❖ Take back her life, her identity
- ❖ Be comfortable with ambivalence



Goals of Interviewing



**Establish
Rapport**



**Gather
Information
Efficiently**



**Formulate
Advocacy
Needs**



**Assess for
Safety**



Advocate Mentality for Coercive Control/DA Support

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CLIENT:

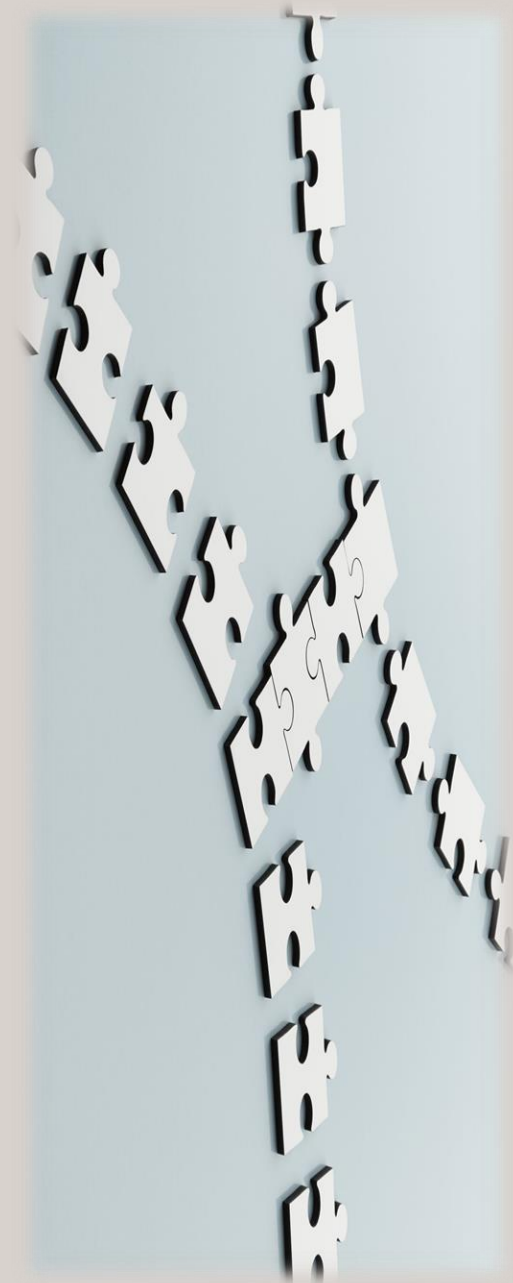
- Advocate must respect, value, and accept the client as a human being

WORKING HYPOTHESIS:

- Survivor has the capacity to deal constructively with their problems

GUIDING ADVOCACY PRINCIPLE:

- Assume the internal frame of reference of the survivor



Advocacy Interviewing Training

**Listen 90%,
Provide
input 10%**

- **First interview—allow 90 minutes for survivor to tell her story**

**Training in
Advocacy
Interviewing**

- **develop your skills related to advocacy needs**
- **refine your skills related to advocacy needs**



Listen 90%

W *HY*
A *M*
I
T *ALKING*

W *HY*
A *M*
I
S *TILL*
T *ALKING*

Reciprocal Nature of Interviewing

Social Facilitation

- We tend to act like those around us.
- If the interviewer is tense, the interviewee will be tense; if the interviewer is relaxed, the interviewee will be relaxed.
- Works during interviews, as well as during crisis interventions or anytime people interact for extended periods of time
- Also seen in social and developmental psychology

Reciprocal Nature of Interviewing

Social Facilitation

- Since social facilitation has a strong behavioral influence on both the interviewer and the interviewee it is easy to see that it can lead to bias in an interview
- A “good” interviewer will be aware of the power of social facilitation and remain calm and in control regardless of the interviewee’s behavior

Principles of Effective Interviewing

PROPER ATTITUDE:

Interpersonal influence

- the degree to which one person can influence another

Is related to interpersonal attraction

- the degree to which people share a feeling of understanding, mutual respect, similarity



Principles of Effective Interviewing

Responses to avoid in an interview-avoid revictimizing

- Those that increase stress
- Judgmental statements
 - puts interviewees on guard
 - communicates approval or disapproval of the interviewee
- Evaluative statements
 - also communicates approval or disapproval
 - may inhibit self-disclosure if interviewee feels that their statements are being evaluated

Principles of Effective Interviewing

Responses to avoid in an interview

- ❖ Probing statements should be used carefully
 - Avoid: “Why...” questions
 - Causes defensive responses
 - May require respondent to reveal more than they are comfortable revealing
 - At times, probing statements are necessary but should be made with care.
 - In general, “how’s” are better than “why’s”



Principles of Effective Interviewing

Responses to avoid in an interview

✓ Hostile statements

- Unnecessary if trying to gather information
- May be used in a “stress interview” but not to be done without experience in this area

✓ False reassurance

- Avoid giving a person reassurance when it is possibly unwarranted
- “Everything will be alright.”

Principles of Effective Interviewing

Effective Responses

- Open-ended questions
 - those that are unable to be answered specifically
- Are better than closed-ended questions
 - those that can be answered specifically
- Open-ended questions promote the flow of information, provide a wide range of area for the interviewee and interviewer to explore.
- However, sometimes closed-ended questions are necessary (e.g. specific info, non-response, children, etc.)



Asking the right questions....

Interviewing skills require knowing what questions to ask, also *how to ask them*.

➤ Do you feel your response was right for domestic violence?

vs.

➤ What happened that lead to you seeking help for domestic abuse?

➤ Tell me in your own words what happened before the incident that lead to your seeking help?

➤ What happened during the incident? What did you do?

➤ How was the church notified about the incident?

➤ Were there children present in the home? Where were the children during the incident?



Practice-Asking Questions

First open-ended question

Reflection

Follow up open-ended question

What did you learn about your style?

- **Tendency to ask closed-ended questions?**
- **Tendency to ask “why” questions?**

The Value of Listening

- Proverbs 20:5-- The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.
- James 1:19— My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.
- Our Lord listens to us!
- I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live Psalm 116:1-2
- If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. Pr. 18:13



Principles of Effective Interviewing

Other ways
to keep
interactions
flowing

Transitional phrases

Verbatim playback

Paraphrasing and restatement

Summarizing

Clarifying

Empathizing / Demonstrating understanding



Principles of Effective Interviewing

Other ways to keep interactions flowing

- ❖ **Transitional phrases**

- “I see” ... “Um hm”
- sometimes are not effective

- ❖ **Best to back up to something relevant to what the interviewee just said**

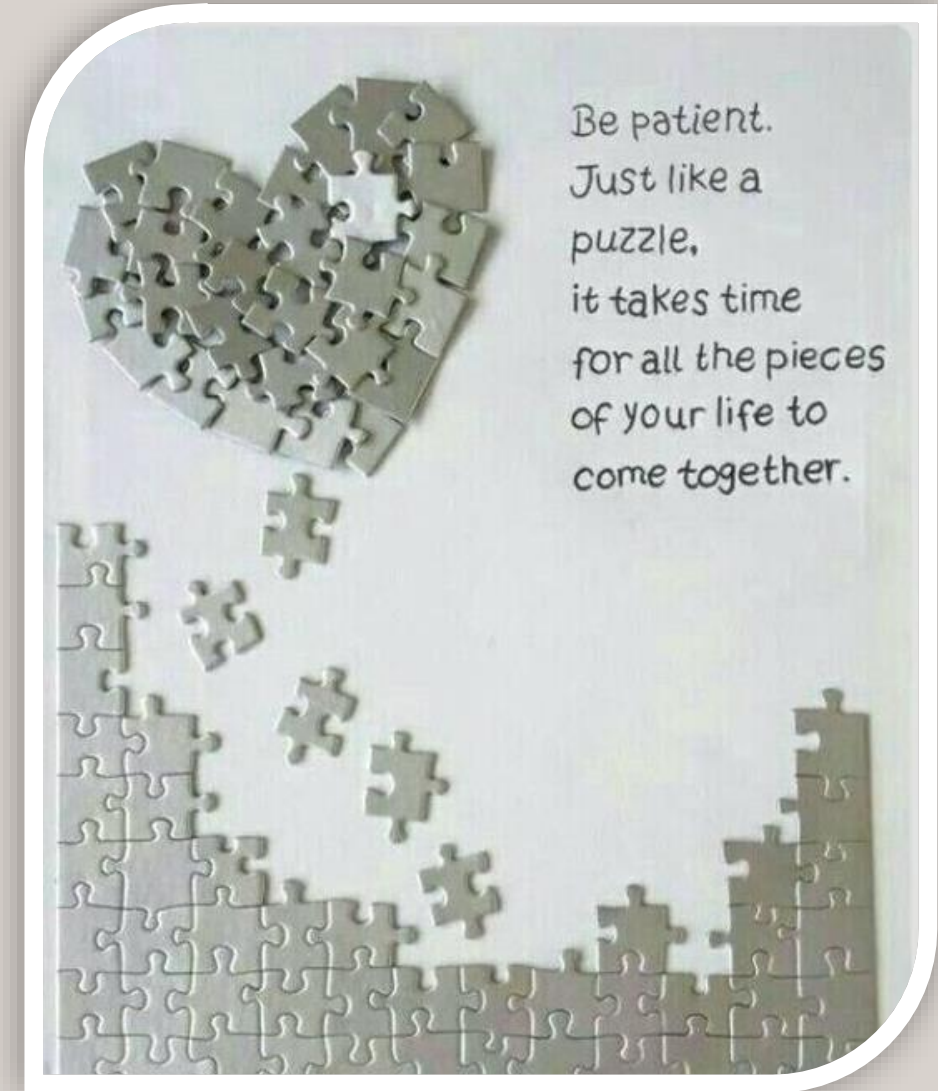
- ❖ **Verbatim playback**

- Repeats information that interviewee just stated
- Reinforces the fact that you are listening
- Also useful in that using the interviewee’s words “connects” you to the interviewee

Areas Covered in DA/CC Advocate Initial Interview

A history of domestic abuse/coercive control, and other abuse history, and assessment and applicable history; alcohol, substance use, other addictive behaviors.

Information needed for a domestic abuse/coercive control advocacy intake interview



Initial Interview Objectives

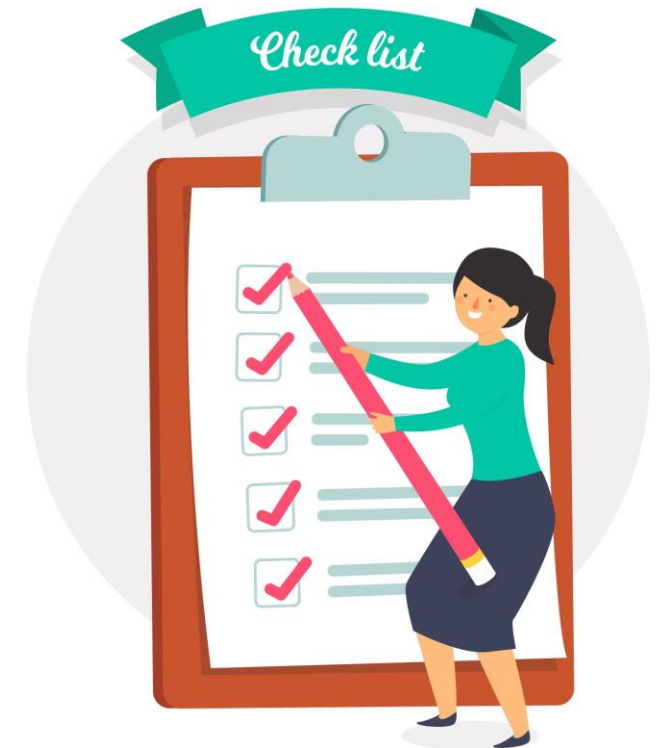
- Identifying information
- Reason for referral/Referral source
- Current Coercive Control/Domestic Abuse incident/pattern
- Discovery documentation reported
- Weapons owned/used
- Children Present:
- Abuser charged with child abuse
 - ✓ Does survivor have to get a child abuse evaluation?
 - ✓ Department of Social Services involved?
- Community Service
- Suicidal/Homicidal
- Previous Police Contact
- Family Court Involvement

Initial Interview Objectives

- Temporary Restraining/Protection Order:
- Permanent Restraining/Protection Order in effect:
- Educational/Employment/Residential History:
- Psycho-Social History/Risk Factors
 - Family History
 - Medical History
 - Coercive Control/Abuse History
 - Treatment history
 - School history
 - Social History
 - Current behavioral concerns
- Alcohol, Drug, or other addiction involvement:

Initial Interview Objectives

- Childhood Problems
- Criminal/Legal History
- Domestic Violence incident reported
- Current Relationship
- Animals in the home
- Medical History
- Mental Health History
- Substance Abuse and Other Addiction Assessment



Initial Interview Objective

Advocate Impressions:

Assessment for support amenability:

1. Attitude towards advocacy:
2. Learning styles:
3. Previous response to advocacy and support
4. Disabilities or special needs including language differences requiring accommodation:

Safety Assessment for risk of physical and emotional harm

Advocate documents assessment method used.

Assessment Instruments Used

Safety Assessment to include Lethality Assessment
<https://www.dangerassessment.org/>

Mosaic Threat Assessment <https://www.mosaicmethod.com/>

Types of Abuse Assessment—Coercive Control Checklists
available here
https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/ipv_assess.htm

Interview



Consultation Use

Consultation with (whomever you consult with)

Other collateral information (indirect for victim advocacy)



Initial Interview Objectives

- Risk factors associated with likelihood of increased violence/coercive control being used against survivor (See Monckton-Smith, 2020)
- Other factors for consideration:
 1. Language or cultural issues:
 2. High-level resistance based on biblical interpretations:
 3. Transportation barriers:
- Assessment of strengths based on information gathered in the evaluation:
- Personal Goals and strategies to obtain them



Interviewing Skills applied to CC/DA Advocacy Survivors

I. Preparing yourself for the interview

II. Attending, listening, action skills—Revisiting the Basics

III. Tune in:

IV. Approaches

V. What is CC/DA advocacy interviewing vs. traditional interviewing?

VI. Why are specialized Interviewing Techniques/Skills needed?

VII. What is survivor resistance in CC/DV Advocacy?



Interviewing Skills: Active Listening

Paraphrasing / Restatement

- rephrasing the content of what has been said
- reinforces the fact that you are, in fact, listening
- “checks in” with the client, to make sure that you’ve interpreted the information correctly.

Summarizing

- paraphrasing combined with reflection
- pulls together the meaning of several responses
- used to organize previous information
- can be used to direct the interview

Practice-Asking Questions

First open-ended question

Reflection

Follow up open-ended question

What active listening skills did you use?

- **How did you listen 90%?**
- **What information did you provide?**

The Value of Questions versus giving direction

Notice that Jesus rarely answered questions with a direct answer (only 3). Instead, he responded with challenges and questions with questions to elicit contemplation. In fact, he asked over 330 questions in the Gospels, while he was only asked 183.



- Matt. 12:10-11-- Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out?”
- “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” Matthew 15:2-3-- Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”
- Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? So, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Luke 11:9-11

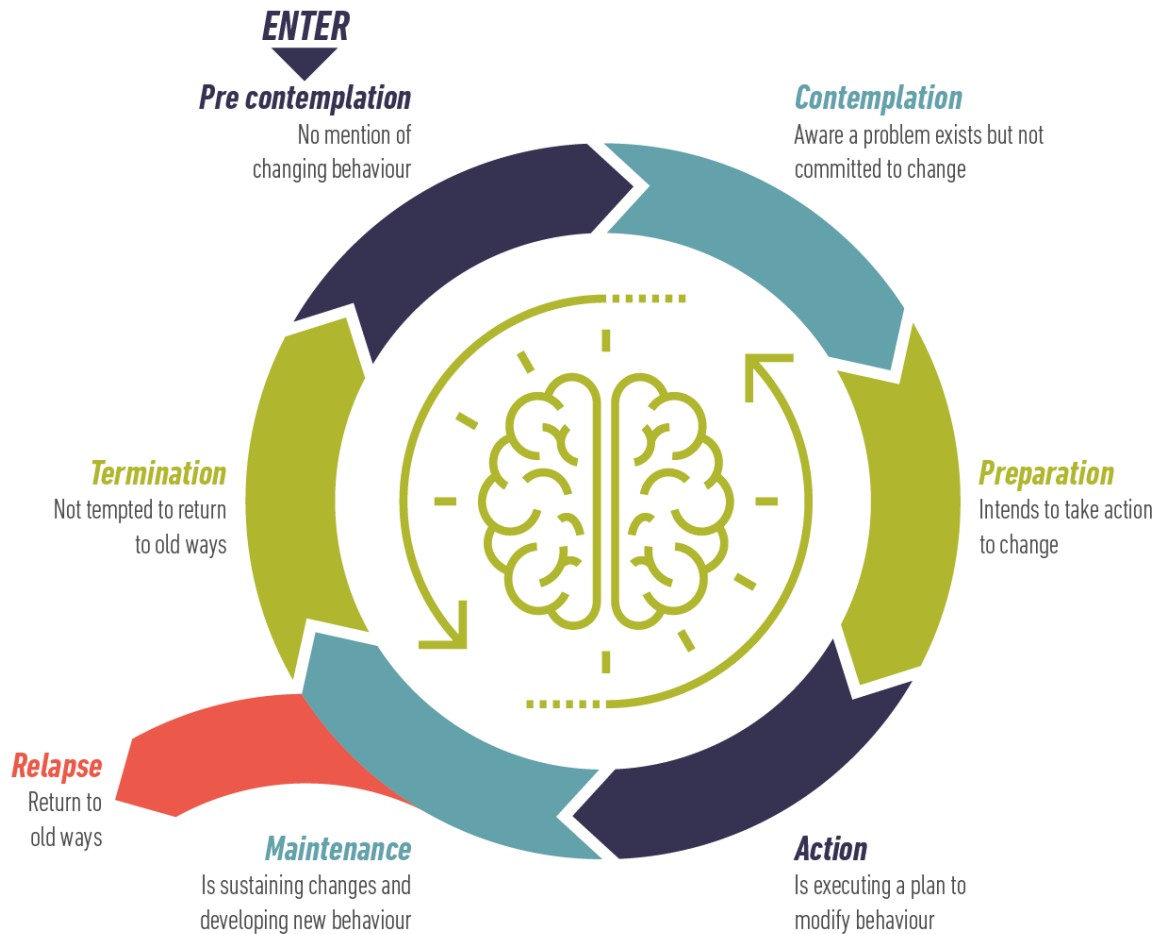
Motivational Interviewing for Coercive Control Survivors

- Stages of Change—TTM of Change
- What is MI?
- Readiness to Change
- MI Counseling Strategies
- Integrating MI with CBT & Cognitive Restructuring



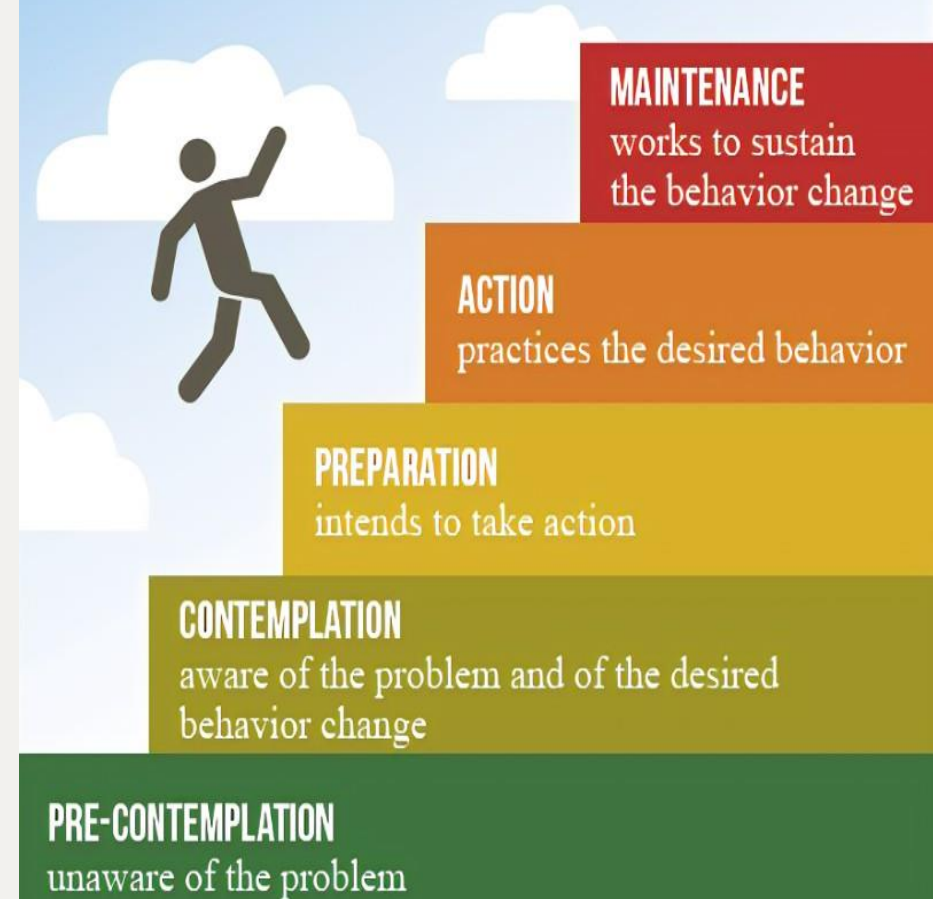
Stages of Change

Stages of change



Adapted from Prochaska and DiClemente 1983

THE STAGES OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE



The Stages of Change

Precontemplation (Not yet acknowledging that there is a problem behavior that needs to be changed)

Contemplation (Acknowledging that there is a problem but not yet ready or sure of wanting to make a change)

Preparation/Determination (Getting ready to change)

Action/Willpower (Changing behavior)

Maintenance (Maintaining the behavior change) and

Relapse (Returning to older behaviors and abandoning the new changes)

Relapse and Recycling - Slipping Back to Previous Behavior and Re-entering the Cycle of Change

Termination - Leaving the cycle of change



From Contemplation...

To Action



Stages of Change Tasks

Precontemplation

Awareness, Concern, Confidence

Contemplation

Risk-Reward Analysis & Decision making

Preparation

**Commitment & Creating an
Effective/Acceptable Plan**

Action

**Adequate Implementation of Plan and
Revising as Needed**

Maintenance

Integration into Lifestyle

Approaches that Pay Attention to the Process of Change

- Clearly identify the target behavior
- Evaluate stage of readiness to change
- Evaluate beliefs and practices related to target behavior
- Examine routes and mechanisms of influence in the culture and for the individual
- Create sensitive stage based multi-component interventions
- Re-evaluate regularly the process of change



Processes of Change

- ✓ Change is the engine that enables movement through the stages of change
- ✓ Doing the right thing at the right time
- ✓ Cognitive/behavioral processes during early stages
- ✓ Behavioral processes in preparation, action and maintenance



Processes of Change



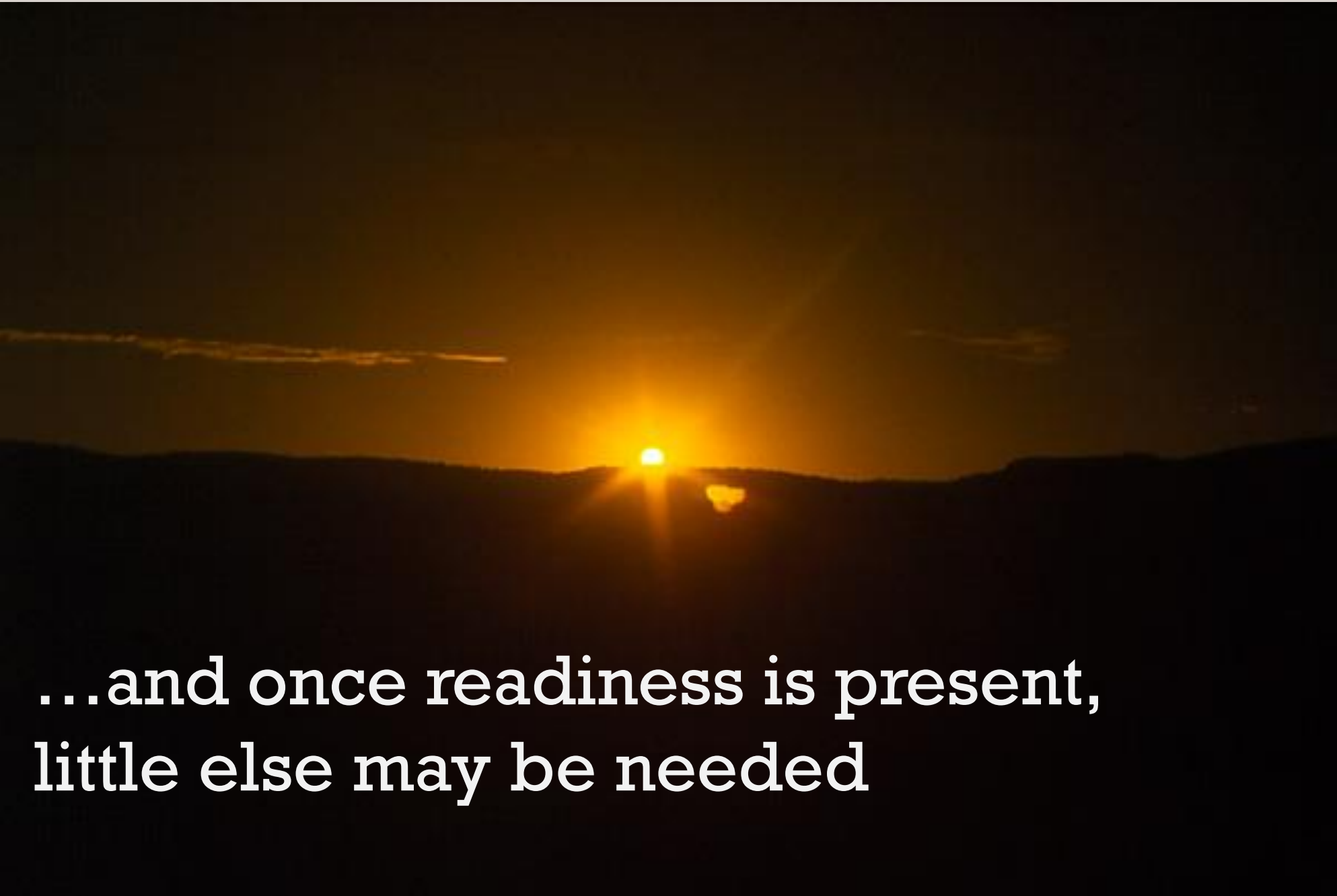
Experiential Processes

- Concern the person's thought processes
- Generally seen in the early Stages of Change

Behavioral Processes

- Action oriented
- Usually seen in the later Stages of Change





...and once readiness is present,
little else may be needed

Context of Change

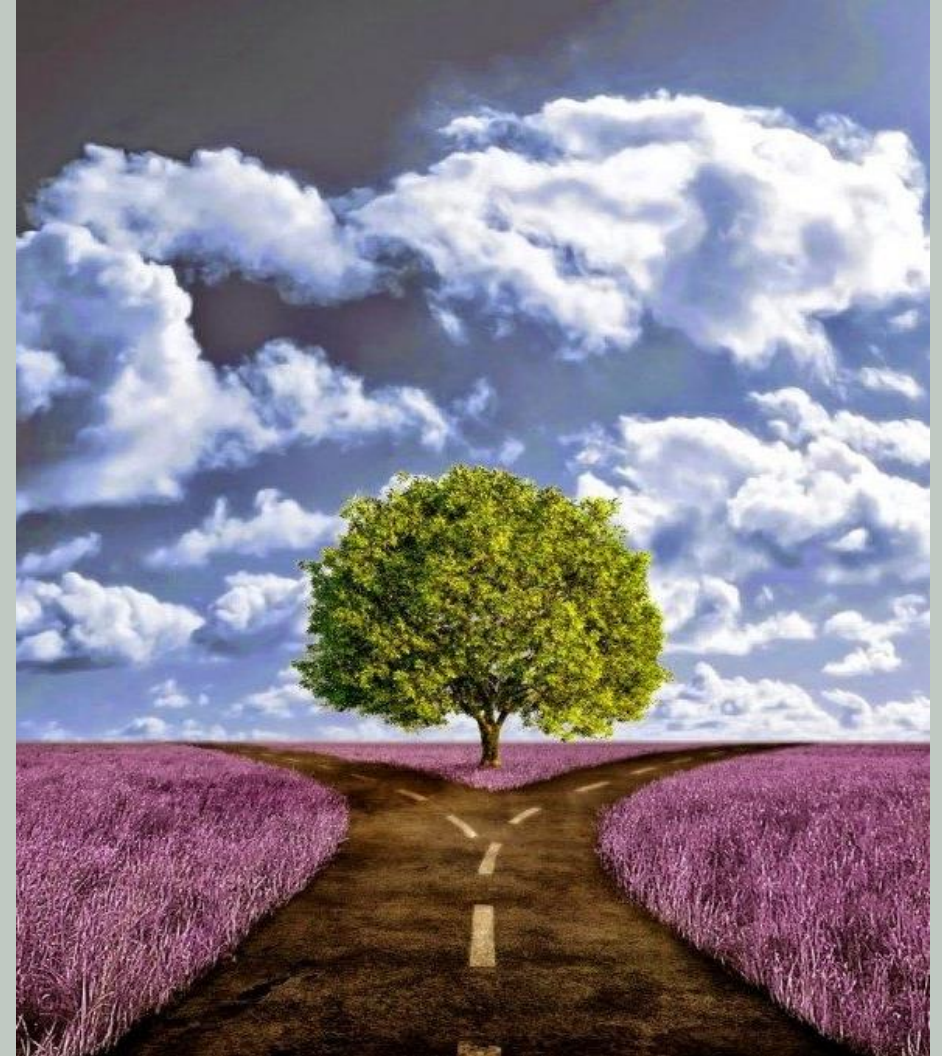
Situational Resources & Problems

Cognitions & Beliefs

Interpersonal Resources & Problems

Family & Systems

Enduring Personal Characteristics



Decisional Balance Worksheet

NO CHANGE

CHANGE

PROS (Behavior)

CONS (Behavior)

CONS (Change)

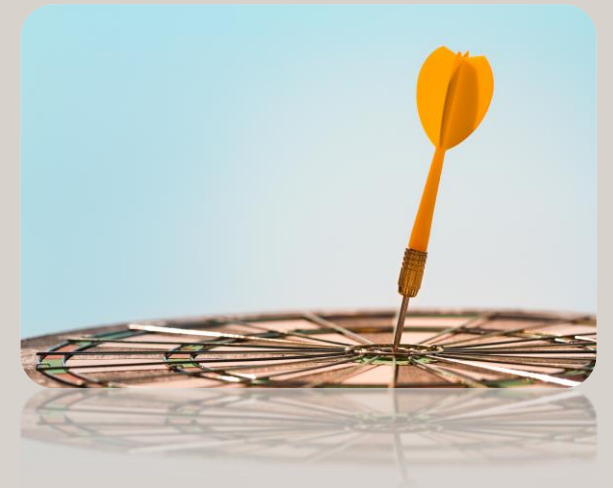
PROS (Change)

Confrontational Approaches

- Argues that the person has a problem and needs to change
- Offers direct advice or prescribes solutions to the problem without the person's permission or without actively encouraging the person to make his or her own choices
- Uses an authoritative/expert stance leaving the survivor in a passive role
- Does most of the talking, or functions as a unidirectional information delivery system
- Imposes a diagnostic label
- Behaves in a punitive or coercive manner

What is MI?

- Motivational interviewing is a directive, survivor-centered advocacy style for eliciting behavior change by helping survivors to explore and resolve ambivalence.
- Compared with nondirective advocacy, it is more focused and goal-directed.
- The examination and resolution of ambivalence is its central purpose, and the advocate is intentionally directive in pursuing this goal.



The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

- Motivation to change is elicited from the survivor, and the advocate refrains from pushing for change.
- It is the survivor's task to articulate and resolve his or her ambivalence. The advocate's task is to facilitate the survivor's choice to do things differently.
- Direct persuasion is an ineffective method for resolving ambivalence.
- The advocacy style is generally a quiet and eliciting one.
- The advocate is directive in helping the client to examine and resolve ambivalence.
- Readiness to change is a fluctuating product of interpersonal interaction.
- The advocate relationship is more like a partnership or companionship than expert/recipient roles.

Specific and trainable advocate behaviors characteristic of Motivational Interviewing style

- Seeking to understand the survivor's frame of reference, particularly via reflective listening
- Expressing acceptance and affirmation
- Eliciting and selectively reinforcing the survivor's own self motivational statements expressions of problem recognition, concern, desire and intention to change, and ability to change
- Monitoring the survivor's degree of readiness to change, and ensuring that resistance is not generated by jumping ahead of the survivor.
- Affirming the survivor's freedom of choice and self-direction

MI General Principles

Express empathy

Listen reflectively

Develop awareness

Ask meaningful questions

Avoid argumentation

Roll with resistance

Provide selective feedback

Affirm self-efficacy

**FIVE PRINCIPLES OF
MOTIVATIONAL
INTERVIEWING**

 Express empathy for the client

Develop discrepancy between the client's goals and values and their current behavior, particularly regarding substance use 

 Avoid argumentation and direct confrontation


Roll with client resistance, instead of fighting it 

 Support the client's self-efficacy, or their belief that they can change

Confrontation is Goal- not Style

- Goal of MI is to increase ambivalence about coercive control to support the change process.
- Research shows survivors become resistant when advocates use strategies inappropriate for survivors' current stage of change.
- We change the MI strategies to fluctuate with readiness for change.
- The goal = have the survivor argue for change.





• **2 Corinthians 1:3-- Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.**

• **"Carry each other's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2**

**Advocacy
and
Listening
Bring
Comfort**

Effective Motivational Approaches



Giving **ADVICE**



Removing
BARRIERS



Providing
CHOICE



Decreasing
DESIRABILITY



Practicing
EMPATHY



Providing
FEEDBACK



Clarifying
GOALS



Active
HELPING

Giving Advice

Give

Give advice only when individuals will be receptive

Target

Target advice to stage of change

- Clearly identify the problem or risk area
- Explain why change is important
- Advocate specific change

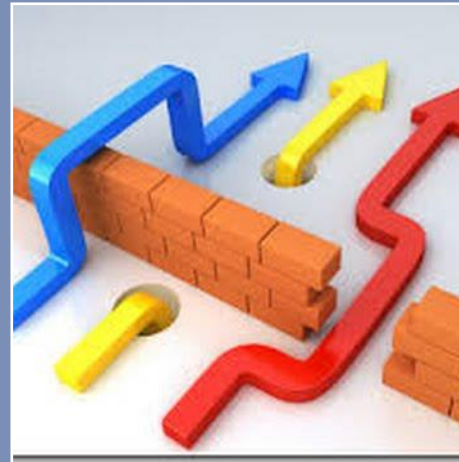


Removing Barriers



Bolster self-efficacy

Address logistical barriers



Provide Choices

It's the individual's choice:

- Whether to change
- How to change



Decrease Desirability

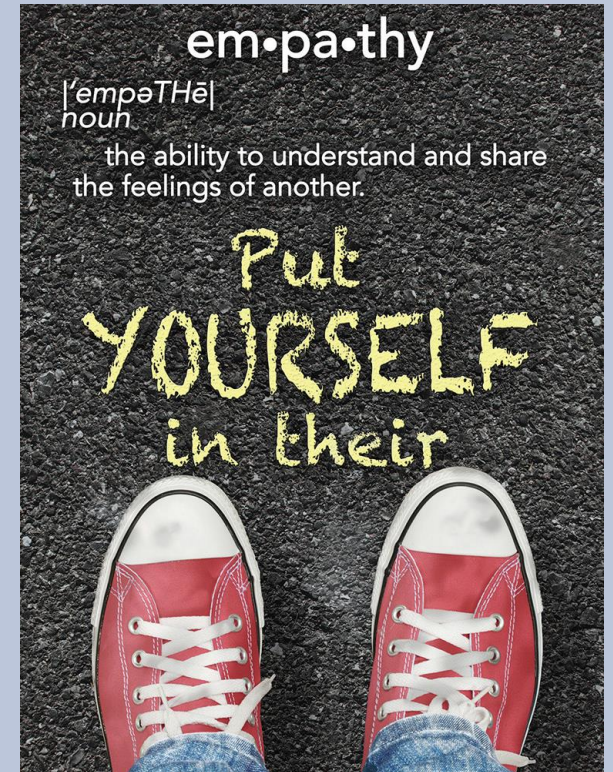
Help individuals:

- Decrease their perceptions of the desirability of maintaining the behavior
- Identify other behaviors to replace the positives of current behavior



Practicing Empathy

- Develop and communicate an understanding of the individual's situation and feelings around the behavior
- Explore pain around the behavior
- Empathy communicates acceptance, while supporting the process of change.
- Acceptance facilitates change.
- Advocate seeks to build up rather than tear down.
- Skillful reflective listening is fundamental to expressing empathy.



Providing Feedback

Help the individual identify and understand relevant:

Risks of the behavior

Negative consequences of the behavior



Clarifying Goals

Help individuals weigh:

Pros and cons of their behavior

Pros and cons of changing their behavior in light of their goals for the future



Active Helping

Without assuming responsibility for behavioral change, extend yourself and show you care



Some MI “Traps”

Recognizing and Working with Resistance

❖ Signs of survivor counter-motivation might include:

interrupting,

ignoring,

arguing,

denying,

talking about
seemingly
unimportant
matters,

daydreaming,

reminiscing,

"wondering
aloud"



Traps to Avoid

Question/Answer Trap



Confrontation/Denial Trap



Expert Trap



Labeling Trap



Premature Focus Trap



Blaming Trap



The Question-Answer Trap

Reinforces the survivor being in a passive role, waiting for the advocate to figure out the answer

Encourages brief answers, without the additional info needed for MI

Open-ended questions w/o reflective listening responses can have the same effect

Generally, avoid asking 3 questions in a row

Confrontation-Denial Trap

If an advocate takes one side of the argument (to change) then the survivor who is not ready will take the other side of the argument (to stay the same or keep being victimized).

In this way, the conversation builds more denial and resistance.

The goal is to reflect what the survivor is saying and **AVOID** listing the reasons a person should change.

The Expert Trap

MI as a collaboration, instead of the advocate imparting wisdom

Survivor is the expert on his/her situation

Similar to the question-answer trap in placing the survivor in the passive role

Avoid shifting prematurely to prescribing solutions, & doing problem-solving

The Labeling Trap

While some survivors benefit from accepting a label like “victim” or “survivor”, this is unnecessary for each survivor’s success

Pressuring survivors to accept a label can reflect a power struggle in which the advocate attempts to assert control

Other buzzwords can elicit resistance, e.g., “your problem”

The MI approach de-emphasizes labeling

The Premature Focus Trap

Trying too soon to focus in on leaving a coercive controlling relationship as the main issue may elicit much increased resistance

Better to start with the survivor's concerns-likely to eventually lead back to coercive control issues

The Blaming Trap

Survivor in advocacy may be very focused on figuring out who is to blame for the problem

Useful to directly tell the survivor that advocacy is about figuring out what are healthy choices for their lives (and their children).

Interaction Techniques (OARS)

Open-
ended
questions

Affirmations

Reflective
listening

Summaries

Open Ended Questions and Prompts

Tell me about...

Why do you think...?

How did you...?

What happened when...?

What else can you do with...?

What would happen if...?

How might you use...?

I wonder if...

simplypreschool.com

Reasons for Relapse

Lack of Willpower/Experience

Environmental Pressures

Situational Cues

Inadequate skills

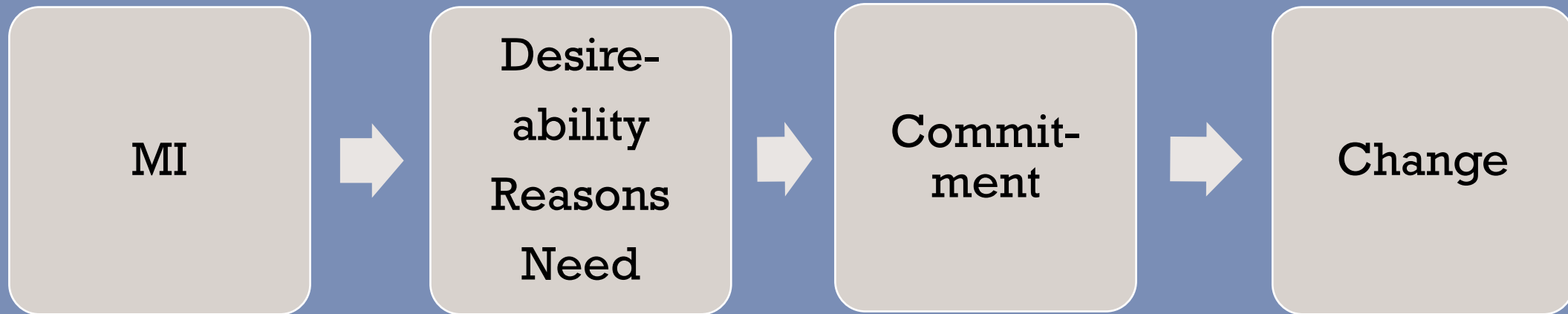
Lack of Support for Change

Problematic Self-Efficacy

Part of the Process of Change



The Flow of Change Talk





From Contemplation...

To Action



Priority of asking questions and seeking...

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7 ESV

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Jeremiah 33:3 ESV





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