



BASW Seminar.

Families and substance use.

Difficult conversations : engaging families
and social work practise.

Workshop Aims

- To explore barriers to engagement
- To explore approaches that lower natural defensive
- Collaborating with families in outcome focussed work
- Explore our best practise: Core skills and strategic tools.

programme

- We will explore core skills before lunch
- Tools and strategies after lunch

Our task

- To engage families
- To help them express concerns
- To help them express aspirations
- To help them build confidence and skills
- To help them utilise the skills to offset their risks
- To safeguard their children and their families.
- To sustain the changes over time



Complex families

Complex systems

Complex tasks

- We intervene at times of great stress and challenge
- We are interested in helping people maximise their potential
- ‘Empowerment’
- We are interested in the safety and well being of those most vulnerable
- ‘Safeguarding’
- Our communication style and approach enables us in being effective.

Focus

- We notice people for the problems they face not just the problems they cause
- We notice peoples abilities to offset their risks
- We help people develop safe functioning in timescales appropriate to their children's needs.
- We help people set goals , change behaviour, sustain change over time.




Families with complex needs

- We need and want to engage with families where there are substance misuse issues that impact on their children.

Skills/knowledge

- Assisting families to achieve change and sustain it rests largely on the depth of our skills
- Not necessarily the depth of our specialist knowledge.
- How we approach an issue affects the outcome
- E.g. we may not know everything about substances but we do know how to talk to people who are under stress and struggling.
- Rely on your skills ! Be confident in your skills !



How we approach the issue effects the
outcome.

change !

Think to yourself about something that you think about changing?

- For example:-
- Eat less or differently
- Do more exercise
- Get a better work life balance
- See more of your family



Now imagine !

- I am going to ask you to make a commitment to that change before you leave today !



Impact

- How are you feeling ?
- How do you feel about me ?

Experiencing Behaviour Change

- Persuasion isn't effective for helping us decide to make changes.
- Individuals NOT information make decisions.
- If we do decide to change, unless we have made the decision ourselves we may be unlikely to keep it going.
- We all have unique circumstances which feed into our decisions to change....or not.

Skilled listening

- Listen
- Empathise
- understand
- Without judgement
- Without advice

Good communication

- Talk to the person next to you about the issue you have been thinking about changing, listen carefully for 2 minutes then then change sides.

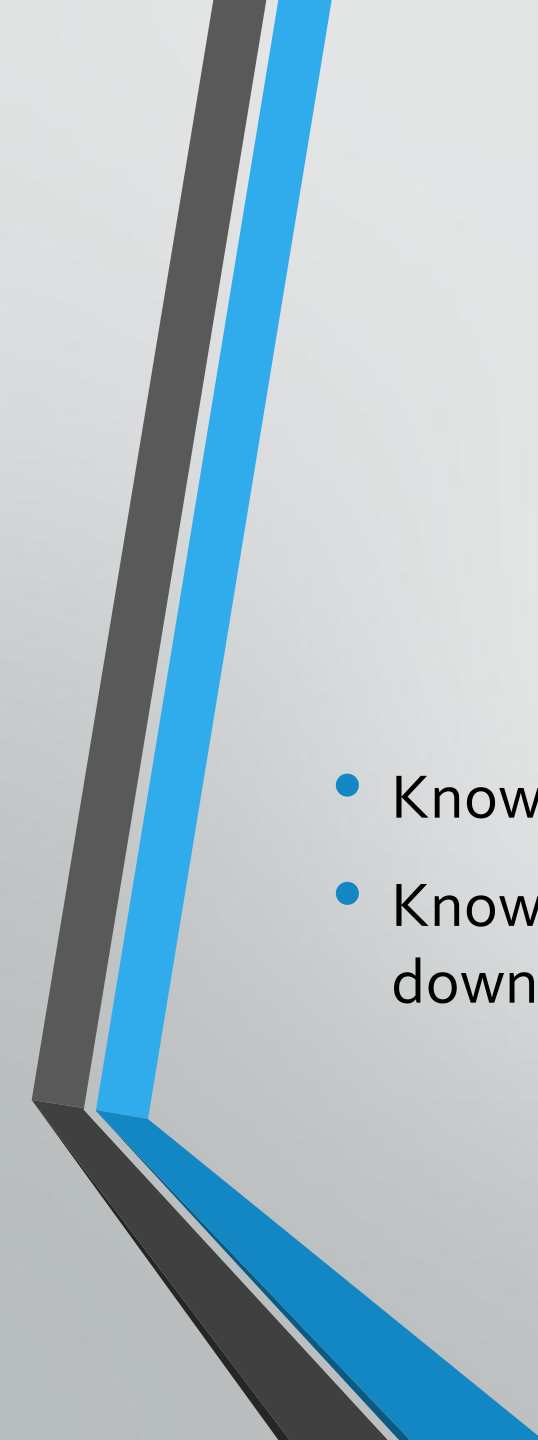
Where are we in terms of readiness ?

Thinking about it I am weighing up the pros and cons of what I am doing and considering whether to make changes or not.

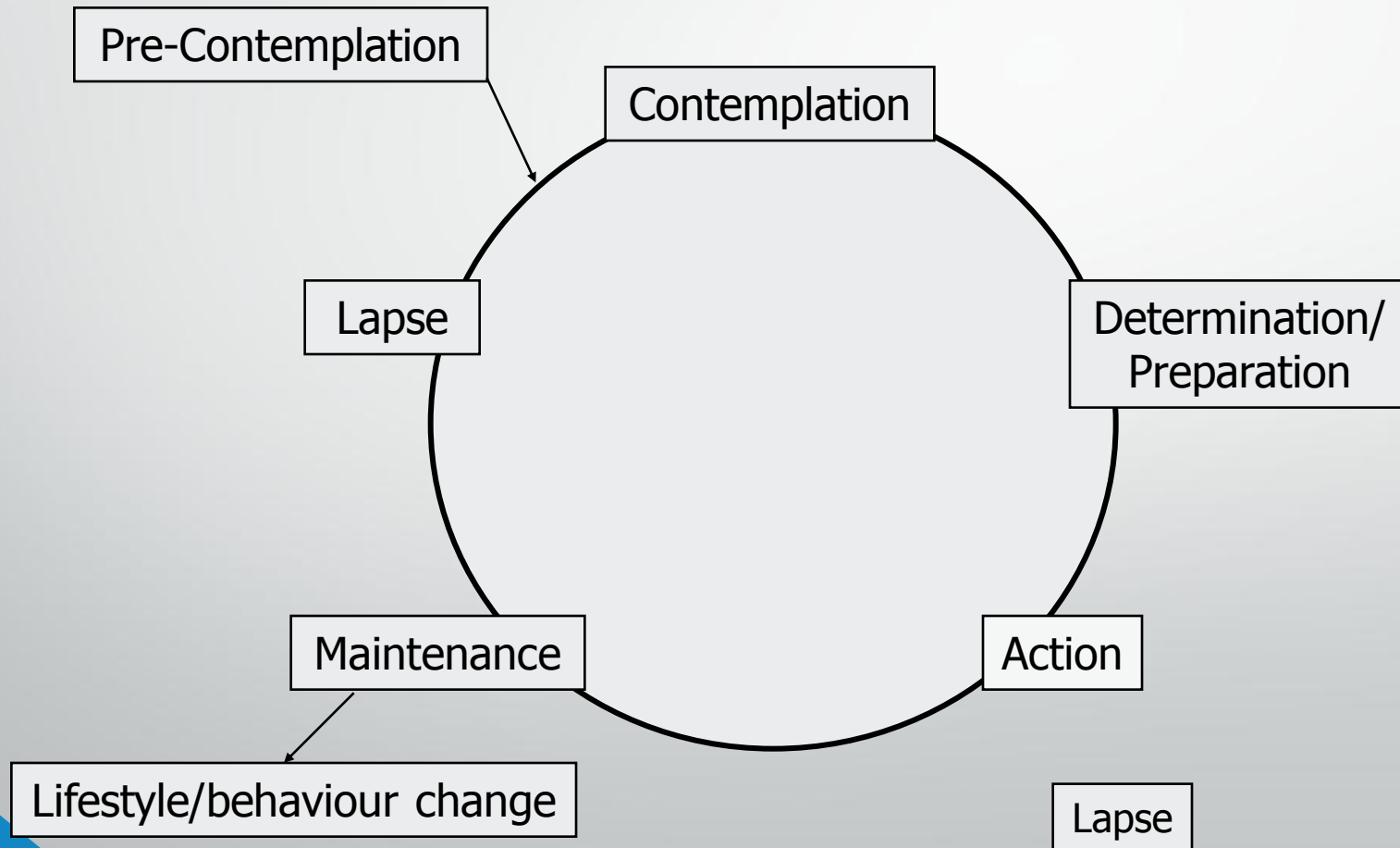
Doing something. I have decided to make some changes and am putting my plan into action. I feel both excited and nervous.

Keeping it going. I have made a change and am now trying to keep it going. Sometimes I like the new me, sometimes I miss what I was doing before.

Going back to old ways. I didn't keep it going and now feel like I have gone backwards. In some ways it was a relief to go back. Not sure whether to try again.

- 
- Know where people are as you engage
 - Know what people need from you to keep moving forward and avoid closing down.

Transtheoretical Model of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente 1983)



Ambivalence

- An internal argument
- It needs to be resolved by the person themselves
- Connecting with their intrinsic motivation assists resolution
- Help them to clarify their dilemma
- Avoid taking sides in the argument as this will distract the person from resolving their ambivalence.

determination

- Help people formulate their plan
- Resist making it your plan

action

- Help people recognise existing skills
- Then help them develop more skills in order to achieve their goals
- E.g. parenting skills , coping mechanisms , assertiveness, communication, empathy , self talk self confidence

maintain

- Explore what's working , where are the risks of relapse ,achievements and challenges,
- Review safety plans

lapse

- Explore in detail , affirm achievements, learn more and move on
- Review safety plan.

Worker tasks

- **Precontemplation (before thinking)**
- Explore hopes fears and discrepancy
- **Contemplation (thinking)**
- Explore pros and cons, avoid taking a side, help people express hopes and fears.
- **Determination (commitment)**
- Help people determine the best course of action for them
- **Action (skills building and practise)**
- Help them build on strengths and practise new ways
- **Maintanance (keeping focussed)**
- Help them notice achievements and anticipate threats
- **Lapse (wobbling or falling off)**
- Help people take stock and recommit.



Back to your conversation about change

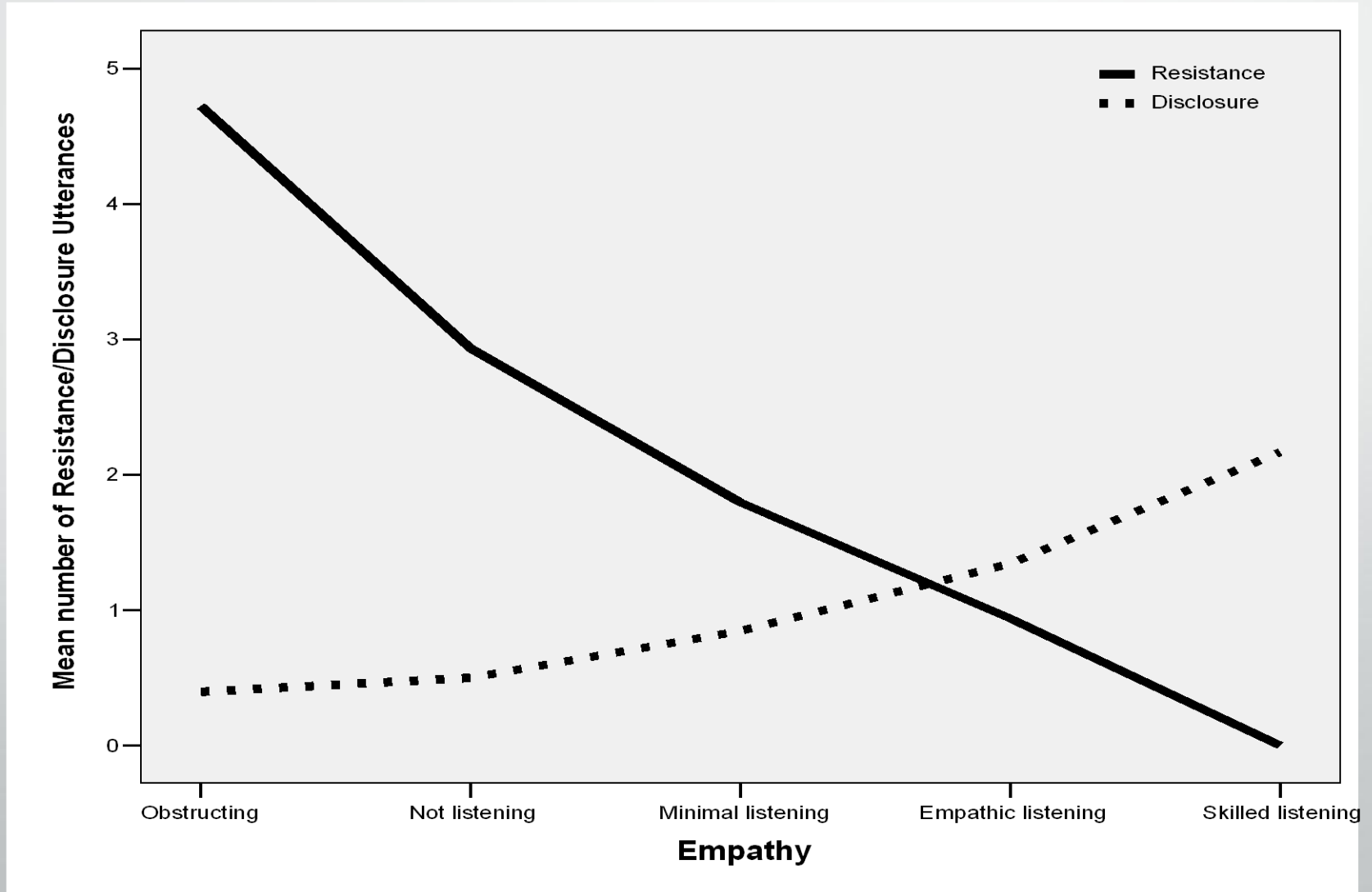
Importance and confidence

- How important do you think it is to make or maintain your change
- 0-----10
- How confident do you feel that you can make or maintain your change
- 0-----10

In your pairs


- Identify the low scores
- Ask what would need to happen to take the score up by one point ?
- Listen and reflect.

Empathy and Client Resistance and Disclosure



The power and influence of the relationship

- What are the elements of effective communication from your experience ?
- Discuss at your tables 5 minutes
- feedback



What are the elements of good communication that we rely on to be effective?

- Empathy
- Warmth
- Clarity of concerns
- Recognition of strengths

The essence

Collaboration.....engage

Listening and evoking...understanding

Respecting autonomy...sustained change

The Micro Skills or 'OARS'

- Ask **O**pen minded questions
- **A**ffirm
- Listen **R**eflectively
- **S**ummarise

Reflective Listening

A reflection is a statement not a question.

Reflections help to engage the client in a ‘reflective space.’

They help to engage the client in connecting with their internal motivations.

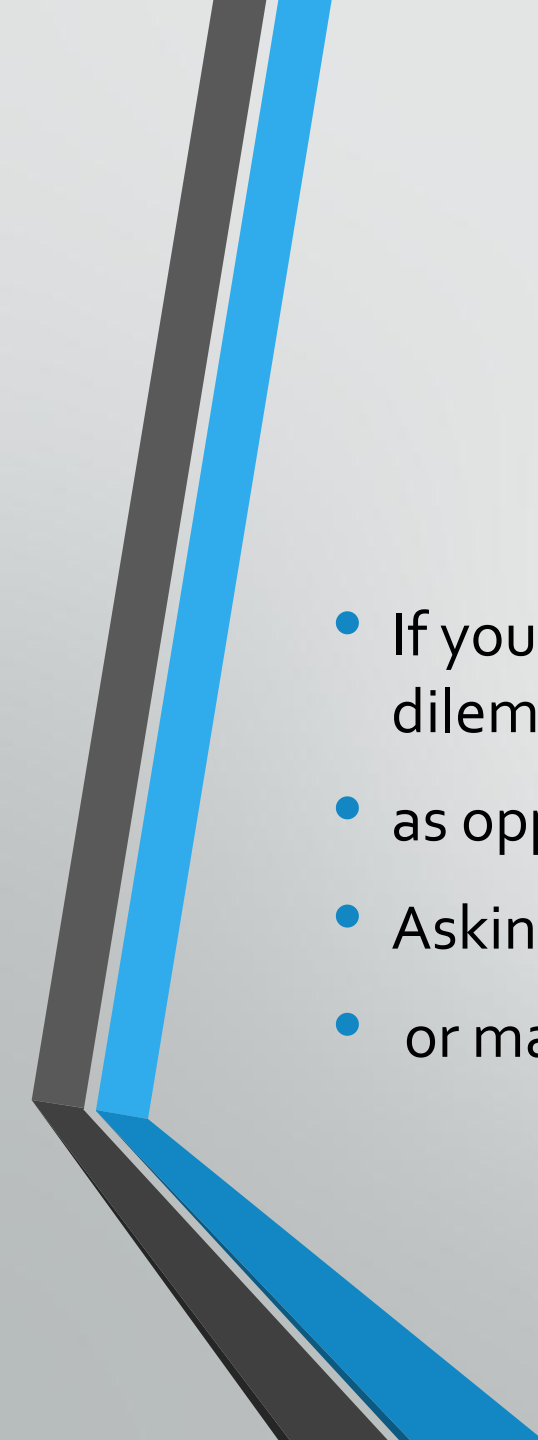
They can express content, feeling and meaning.

reflections

- What we mean
- What we say
- What the listener hears
- What the listener thinks we mean and feel
- Offering reflective statements offer deeper meanings
- Create greater insight
- Builds empathic understanding
- Intensifies the impact of the communication.

demo

- What would you say next ?
- What they might mean
- What they might feel
- Affirming reflection what's important to them
- What they care about

- 
- If you are reflecting you are focussing on their world , their thoughts , their dilemmas.
 - as opposed to
 - Asking questioning which is helping us get a better picture
 - or making suggestions or offering advice from our perspectives.

Skills Practice

In pairs

- **Speaker : be prepared to discuss something you are concerned about or would like to change**
- **Listener: reflect, affirm, summarise. Try not to ask questions or provide solutions**

Allow 5 minutes for practice and 5 minutes for debrief.

Swap over so that everyone has a go in each role.

Asking Questions

- Open, not Closed
- Simple, not Multiple
- Not Leading
- Avoid 'Why'
- Strategic Key questions

Affirmations

notice a client's strength & resources

Rooted in observations & evidence

Not praising but:-

offering

Statements of appreciation & understanding

Builds self efficacy

Strengthens & builds your working relationship

affirming


- Turn back to the person who has been listening to you and let them know what you have noticed about their skills, values , strengths , beliefs and values.
- “you are someone who.....

Summarising

A special application of reflective listening

Basic elements contain the pros, the cons, challenges and achievements

End with an invitation for the client to continue to notice , achievements , thoughts, feelings, empower.



Imagine you are asked to think about something in
your own life.

- Something you did or said that you regret.
- Imagine I ask one of you to share the story with the rest of the group
- Now
- What do you do ? And how do you feel ?

behaviour

- Behaviour
- Refuse to cooperate
- Make something up
- Lie
- leave

feelings

- Fear , of consequences,
- being judged
- Shame, guilt
- Vulnerable
- anxious

Resistance

- A Natural defence
- Natural response to pressure
- External ;from threat or authority
- Internal :from fear shame or guilt.

Consider service users you are working with

- What defensive or resistant behaviours do you see ?
- What feeling do you think lie behind those behaviours
- Share with each other your 'top tips' for lowering those resistance barriers
- Feedback some thoughts from the floor.

Strategies for dealing with resistance

Resist hitting it head on

Acknowledge the feelings

Empathise, Accept, Reflect and Explore

Shift to strengths based conversation.

Emphasise personal choice and control

Avoid argumentation

Summary:

Principles of effective communication

Listen and Express Empathy through reflections

Explore concerns and aspirations from their perspective

Expect natural defensiveness use skills to lower the barriers

Support the person's sense of their abilities notice and reflect strengths

Avoid Arguments and confrontation



A new case

Case study

- Julie has 2 children Hayley (18) and Vicki (10)
- Their Dad lives nearby and has a new family.
- He still sees the children
- Julie is seeing Harvey and they have a baby on the way.
- She is six months pregnant
- Harvey lives in his own place but stays on a regular basis.
- Hayley has just moved out to live with her boyfriend, she is worried about Vicki and her mum.
- Julie works in the local bar and has relied on alcohol in the past to help with stressful and sad times
- Vicki is often alone when her mum is in work
- Recently she was found, in the company of older girls ,at the home of a known paedophile .
- When the police called at the pub to inform her mother they found Julie drunk and abusive .
- They placed Vicki in care on a PPO
- Vicki has returned home an assessment has been carried out and a plan developed
- Vicki attends school but is often unkempt and tired.

Harvey is supportive though ambivalent about total commitment to the family.



Case study

Identify the risks and strengths in the family

Good enough outcomes?

What would the family be doing that would help us to feel that this is no longer a child protection issue ?

Early strategies

- Engage explore and empower !



The essence of our approach

- Mouse in the maze study !
- Our approach makes a big difference o long term , generational, sustained change.

First contact

Q. Tell me a bit about what's been happening ?

Reflection examples “ you have a lot on your plate”

“your under a lot of stress”

Q” what concerns you most ?”

You can manage ... but ...feels too difficult

Q “On a day when things are not so bad what do you notice happening”

There are people around who care and help

Q, If things were a little bit better what would that look like.


You have a clear picture of how to improve things.

Strategies to help people talk about change

- Staying focussed on the most important things without pressure or judgement
- Building empathy and understanding in the worker
- Building insight and clarification for the service user
(Empowerment)

Key questions , early strategies engage as many family members as possible

- How would you like things to be (preferred futures) 10
- What's the worst thing that could be happening(worst fears) 0
- Where are you now (explore strengths in themselves and those around them) e.g. 4 or 5
- Where would you like to be (realistic goals) 7 or 8
- constitutes 'Good enough'



Think about your own change guide them
through the decisional balance

Decisional Balance Sheet

Step 1: Good things about staying the same	Step 4: Good things about making the change
Step 2: Not so good things about staying the same	Step 3: Not so good things about making the change



Using strategies.

Sets of questions designed for a specific purpose .

Questions are skills for direction

Reflections and affirmations are skills for depth

When we use a set of questions we need to underpin them with reflections and affirmations.

Be intentional and purposeful .

GAS

- Goal sheets.
- Statement of the problem.
- (Be clear about why it's a problem)
- Good enough” what I will work towards now”.
- Less than good enough “ what I don't want”
- Better than good enough “ what I could eventually achieve”
- In there own words !!

Case study


- Priority areas for the family
- Statements of the problem
- Julie sometimes drinks to a level where she cannot prioritise the needs of her children
- What would 'good enough' be ?
- Vicki is often unsupervised and this has resulted in her being in risky situations
- What would 'good enough' be?

Goals

- Think about this service user who is ready to commit to change.
- Imagine they have made a commitment
- “I will”
- Explore with them
- What would good enough look like (green)?
- What would less than good enough look like (amber/Red)?
- What would better than good enough look like (silver) ?
- Explore and visualise these.
- Ask the service user to describe them in their words to keep and refer to as they move forward.

Safety plans

- Good enough is the goal ,
- What happens if or when you wobble ?
- Who
- what
- when
- How
- Keep it safe so people can learn from a wobble.

- 
- The family know what they are working toward and how to keep themselves safe whilst working on new ways of functioning.

Action plans

- Focussed on goals the most important goals
- Built on strengths, individual, family system , wider environment.
- Practise the new things they need to be confident in
- Coping strategies, enlarging supports, Empathy for each other , understanding ,communication, assertiveness, parenting etc.



Maintain and support

- Identify high risk situations,
- Explore strategies
- Explore safety
- Affirm strengths and commitment

lapse

- Review the incident
- Build on learning
- Review the safety plan
- Allow people to reaffirm their goals.

endings

- Know when to leave.
- Mark the endings with a meeting exploring where people have come from where they have come to and the skills and strengths they are drawing on to succeed.
- Offer a way back in if necessary that does not imply a return to square one. Keep services accessible and flexible
- No less and no more than people need to achieve independence.

Workshop endings

- Your thoughts?