

Questions Asked During the Live Webinar Broadcast on 4/18/12

Q: Where can you get the questions that they use to help the clients along?

A: There are a variety of tools that have been designed to check on the readiness of clients. The simplest are the readiness rulers that ask how ready individuals are to make a specific change or perform a particular behavior. Rulers can also be used to check on how important is a change or how confident the client is in performing the behaviors that are being requested. Although these probes are often used in preparation and action stages, the importance question is particularly useful in earlier stages.

Q: What are the Tasks of Change for organizational change?

A: The tasks are essentially the same as those for individual change. The challenge is identifying who needs to complete the tasks, i.e. who needs to become interested in or concerned about change, who has to make the decision to move forward and create the plan for change, as well as who needs to take action in order for the change to be implemented. The IDDT implementation that I alluded to uses a multi-level strategy engaging individuals from the administration to the counselors and tries to get everyone on the same page. Often there is an individual in an organization who is the champion for a change. However, a champion that does not involve the entire system makes for brittle change and most often whatever the change is disappears once the champion leaves unless the change has become institutionalized.

Q: Can you please help me to understand the difference between DBT and CBT?

A: Yes, DBT is an offshoot of CBT and incorporates several additional techniques and rationales designed to work with more chaotic types of problem clients described as borderline personality disorders. Marsha Linehan specialized in working with these clients and in the cognitive part included working with extreme polar views of these types of clients (dialectic) in trying to bring them to resolution. She also incorporated mindfulness as a source of relaxation and finding inner resources and other types of strategies to address the special needs of these clients. The treatment is more intensive (often multiple sessions per week) and more extensive (longer) than traditional CBT groups.

Q: Doesn't motivational interviewing work well here?

A: Yes, in the earlier stages of change motivational enhancement approaches like MI work very well and can be integrated nicely as more cognitive experiential techniques to support completion of the earlier stage tasks like generating concern and interest and promoting decision making.

Q: This sounds like a treatment plan. How is this different?

A: The treatment plan is what the therapist is committed to doing to provide help and support for the client. The change plan is what clients are going to do to implement changes in their lives. The change plan can incorporate some of the suggested homework given a part of the treatment plan. The treatment plan usually ends after a period of time. The client change plan needs to continue. If both are done well, they do interact so that the treatment plan helps and supports the client change plan.

Q: How might some behavioral interventions (e.g., contingency management) be used for persons in earlier stages of change to engage them into formal care and help "jump start" the process of change?

A: Interesting question. Contingency management can be used to reinforce any behavior. So drug courts are essentially using contingency management to get clients to show up at treatment. Similarly, contingencies could be used to promote activities that could stimulate interest and concern and decision making. For example, some reward for completing a daily diary or for attending one AA meeting just to see what it is like could support the early stage activity and tasks. Sobriety sampling to see if this can work could be incentivized and rewarded on some way. The great American Smoke Out that asked smokers to just stop smoking for one day and then had community and family praise for smokers for doing this is another example. I think that we need to be creative in designing tasks or behaviors and rewards that can be used in this way.