Ten Strategies for Evoking Change Talk

1. **Ask Evocative Questions:** Ask open question, the answer to which is change talk.

2. **Explore Decisional Balance:** Ask first for the good things about status quo, then ask for the not-so-good things.

3. **Ask for Elaboration:** When a change talk theme emerges, ask for more details. In what ways? Tell me more…? What does that look like?

4. **Ask for Examples:** When a change talk theme emerges, ask for specific examples. When was the last time that happened? Give me an example. What else?

5. **Look Back:** Ask about a time before the current concern emerged. How were things better, different?

6. **Look Forward:** Ask what may happen if things continue as they are (status quo). Try the miracle question: If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different? How would you like your life to be five years from now?

7. **Query Extremes:** What are the worst things that might happen if you don’t make this change? What are the best things that might happen if you do make this change?

8. **Use Change Rulers:** Ask, “On a scale from zero to ten, how important is it to you to [target change] - where zero is not at all important, and ten is extremely important? Follow up: And why are you at ___ and not ____? [lower number than they stated]?

9. **Explore Goals and Values:** Ask what the person’s guiding values are. What do they want in life? Using a values card sort can be helpful here. If there is a “problem” behavior, ask how that behavior fits in with the person’s goals or values. Does it help realize a goal or value, interfere with it, or is it irrelevant?

10. **Come Alongside:** Explicitly side with the negative (status quo) side of ambivalence. Perhaps ________ is so important to you that you won’t give it up, no matter what the cost.