

Balancing Multiple Topics

JULY 2020

Staff Activity 2: Prioritizing Change Talk

Thank you for attending the webinar. Here's an activity to help apply the content. There are two options for conducting this activity. This first is a partner activity conducted via phone. The second is a facilitated activity for an in-person group. Both groups are included below.

Option 1: Partner Activity

Background: Change talk could include any talk that might indicate the participant is motivated to make changes in that area. Often change talk is mixed with sustain talk which is talk about staying the same (or not changing the behavior). During the WIC assessment process, you may hear comments with change talk or sustain talk. Sometimes it is clear that there is motivation, but other times it is necessary to probe a little further to see if there is really motivation to change. When there are several potential areas of change talk, and there is limited time, the WIC counselor and participant may need to work together to choose where to focus the discussion. Usually this will be where there is the most internal motivation from the participant.

- With a partner, discuss your experience with picking up on change talk from the participant.
 - What types of change talk do you hear frequently?
 - What types of sustain talk do you hear frequently?
 - What are some examples of change talk that may be stronger and examples of change talk that may be less of a priority?
- With a partner, read the excerpts from a nutrition assessment on the following page. These are three pieces taken from an assessment discussion. All excerpts have some element of change talk and/or sustain talk.
- **STEP 1:** For each excerpt from each scenario, underline any example(s) of change talk.
- **STEP 2:** For each scenario, have a discussion about what you might prioritize if there were limited time. Rank the excerpts into 1st priority, 2nd priority, and 3rd priority. You may decide that two excerpts are of equal priority. If possible, think about how you might potentially connect the areas together during the discussion. [Note: it is ok to disagree about a particular priority. Discuss the potential to connect the areas together in some way.]
- **STEP 3:** Craft a transitional statement that you may use at the end of the assessment to collect input from the participant about the priority area for the nutrition education discussion.

Transitional statements often summarize change talk that came up during the assessment. They can be used to establish priorities for discussion with the participant. If there was one clear priority area with the most change talk, the CPA may choose to focus on that and confirm with the participant that this issue should be the primary object of the discussion. Some example of transitional statements may include:

BALANCING MULTIPLE TOPICS

- From our discussion, it sounds like [TOPIC] is where you want to focus your efforts right now. Is that right?
- It sounds like the thing that is most worrying you right now is [TOPIC 1] so we should talk about that first and then you also mentioned getting a little bit more information about [TOPIC 2]. Is there anything else I am missing?
- It sounds like [TOPIC 1], [TOPIC 2] and [TOPIC 3] may all have some energy for you. What do you see as your biggest priority of the three.
- During the discussion, you brought up [TOPIC]. Would it be helpful for you if we discussed some tips I've heard from other mothers around that? Or would you rather talk about a different topic?

Activity: Prioritizing Change Talk

STEP 1: Read three excerpts for each scenario. Underline any change talk.

STEP 2: Discuss and rank priority levels (1st, 2nd, 3rd)

STEP 3: Craft a transitional statement for the nutrition education discussion.

- **Scenario 1: Pregnant woman**

- Excerpt 1

CPA: How many cigarettes a day are you currently smoking?

PT: Right now, around 10, but that's going to change.

CPA: You have plans in that area.

PT: Yes, I want to start gradually cutting down one by one until I have totally quit.

- Excerpt 2

CPA: About how many fruits and vegetables would you say you eat on an average day?

PT: I get some. I try to have a vegetable with dinner and on most days, I take a piece of fruit from the bowl at work.

CPA: Are there any changes you want to make in this area or in your diet in general?

PT: I feel ok with my diet. I know I am a little overweight, but I've always been that way. My mother said I should eat more vegetables, but in general, I would say my diet is not bad.

- Excerpt 3

CPA: Tell me about your physical activity.

PT: I get some. I should probably do a little more. I know I have gained more weight than the recommended amount.

CPA: It sounds like you have some reasons for wanting to work in a bit more physical activity.

PT: Yes, but it is so hot right now, and I only have a few months to go, so I think I will really make a plan to get into shape after the baby is born.

- Transitional Statement:

- **Scenario 2: 18-month-old**

- Excerpt 1

CPA: Many parents are working on weaning around this time. What is your timetable for that?

PT: I am not really worried about that, especially with all the changes in her routine lately. I think when she goes to preschool in a few months, that will be the time to make changes.

- Excerpt 2

CPA: Tell me about a typical day of food for her.

PT: She's starting to get fussy with eating. It's like she'll only eat certain things. And only a bite or two at a time. She likes mashed up beans. She still likes fruit, and she likes rice, but she pushes away most of the things she used to like. I am not sure what to do. I'm getting worried.

CPA: You want to know what's normal toddler eating behavior and when to be concerned?

PT: Yes.

- Excerpt 3

CPA: Tell me about her beverages.

PT: For the milk, she is down to 3 bottles a day, two if we are out for most of the day. With this heat, she has been drinking lots of juice lately, more than in the winter. Maybe 4-5 times a day. But I have been adding some water to it, so it is not so sweet for her. They told me that the last time I was here, and it seems to be working.

- Transitional Statement:

Option 2: Facilitated Group Activity

- Write the words "Change Talk" and "Sustain Talk" on flip chart prior to the activity.
- Ask for some volunteers to explain their interpretations of these terms or provide some examples of how they may sound from participants.
- Explain that during WIC appointments, when there are several potential areas of change talk and there is only a limited time left in the appointment, the WIC counselor may need to

BALANCING MULTIPLE TOPICS

work with the participant to choose where to focus the nutrition education discussion. Usually this will be where there is the most internal motivation from the participant. Ask for examples of how WIC counselors might summarize the change talk and transition to the nutrition education discussion? [Offer an example below if necessary.]

- Divide the group into pairs or sets of three. Pass out the Activity: Prioritizing Change Talk from previous pages.
- Provide directions:
 - Each person will read the nutrition assessment excerpts that are examples of things that may be heard in nutrition assessment discussion. All excerpts have some element of change talk and/or sustain talk.
 - For each excerpt from the scenario, underline any example(s) of change talk.
 - In your group, have a discussion about how to prioritize topics if there were limited time. Rank the excerpts into 1st priority, 2nd priority, and 3rd priority. The group may decide that two excerpts are of equal priority. If possible, think about ways to connect the areas together during the discussion. [Note: Explain to the groups that it is ok to disagree about a particular priority. If possible, discuss ways to connect the areas together in some way.]
 - Craft a transitional statement to use at the end of the assessment to summarize any areas of motivation and solicit input from the participant about the priority area for discussion. [Explain that the transitional statements can take many forms. If there was one clear priority area with the most change talk, the CPA may choose to focus on that and confirm with the participant that that issue should be the primary object of the discussion. Offer examples of transitional statements below if necessary.
 - From our discussion, it sounds like [TOPIC] is where you want to focus your efforts right now. Is that right?
 - It sounds like the thing that is most worrying you right now is [TOPIC 1] so we should talk about that first and then you also mentioned getting a little bit more information about [TOPIC 2]. Is there anything else I am missing?
 - It sounds like [TOPIC 1], [TOPIC 2] and [TOPIC 3] may all have some energy for you. What do you see as your biggest priority of the three?
 - During the discussion, you brought up [TOPIC]. Would it be helpful for you if we discussed some tips I've heard from other mothers around that? Or would you rather talk about a different topic?
 - After the groups have a chance to complete the activity, bring them back together. For each of the three scenarios, ask for volunteers to share what priority ranking they gave each excerpt and their example of a transitional statement. Encourage those with a different priority ranking to share their rationale and their transitional statement.

BALANCING MULTIPLE TOPICS

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