Becoming An Evidence-Based Practitioner: Making Sense of Resistance

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Rolling with Resistance
“Resistance Examined”

Ability to respond to client resistance in a manner that reflects and understands without reinforcing it. The essence is to roll with – rather than oppose resistance.

Miller & Moyers
“The wisdom is in the resistance”

When WE listen, They talk;

When they talk, THEY discover.

The Five (5) Statements

If these statements were made to you by a consumer, what would be your response?

...volunteers please...
Statement 1

“I’m not the one with the problem. If I drink, it’s just because my family is always nagging me.”

“The only reason you drink is because your family is always nagging you.”

Statement 2

“The results of this test I took says that I have a problem, but that can’t be right—I can stop any time I feel like it.”

“You could stop anytime you feel like it.”

Statement 3

“Who are you to tell me what to do? What do you know about heroin? You’ve probably never even smoked a joint.”

“If you’re going to come here, you want to know it’s going to be helpful.”

Or

“I don’t know your experience.”
**Statement 4**

“I couldn’t change even if I wanted to.”

“There’s no way you could change.”

Or

“You’ve thought about changing.”

**Statement 5**

“I don’t want to quit!”

“You don’t want to quit.”

**Avoiding the “Righting Reflex”**

Taking up the “good,” “better” or healthier side of the ambivalence
REFLECTIVE LISTENING

One strategy: Respond to resistance with nonresistance.

A simple acknowledgment of the client’s disagreement, emotion, or perception usually permits further exploration rather than defensiveness.

— This avoids the confrontation-deny trap.

Amplified Reflection

Increasing the intensity of the resistant element
Reflect back what the client has said in an amplified exaggerated form-to state it in an even more extreme fashion.

Be Careful!! - don’t use a sarcastic tone or too extreme an overstatement or it may elicit hostility or resistance.

DOUBLE SIDED REFLECTIONS

Reflecting both sides of the ambivalence.

Your drinking isn’t that bad

...and you recognize it’s causing some problems in your life.
SHIFTING FOCUS (changing the subject)
Shift the client’s attention away from a stumbling block or impasse. This amounts to going around barriers rather than trying to meet them head-on.

“You’ve talked about what other people say about your drinking. What do you think?”

EMPHASIZING PERSONAL CHOICE/CONTROL
It helps to convey that in the end, it is he/she who will determine what happens.

“It really is your choice about what you do in this situation”

“No one can make you do this. The decision is yours”

“It’s ultimately your choice to take the risk. What would be the worst thing that could happen?”

Siding Strongly with the Negative
“IT sounds like the pros of using still far outweigh the cons for you. So it may be that you decide using is something that you don’t want to give up despite the consequences”
COMING ALONGSIDE
Yes, a court appearance can make anyone feel bad
Having to report in is a hassle in anyone’s life
Most people I know don’t like being told what to do.

DISCLOSING FEELINGS

“I’m getting a stuck feeling.”
“What are you feeling?”

Right?
Have you ever argued with someone that is significant in your life?
Arguments are about the Right Position.
MI is about a willingness to suspend the Right Position for the greater good.
One of the best lessons you can learn in life is to master how to remain calm.

Resistance is a Protector

When lowered people can dream