

Motivational Groups for Community Substance Abuse Programs

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Simple reflection

One way to reduce resistance is simply to repeat or rephrase what the client has said. This communicates that you have heard the person, and that you do not intend to debate or argue with the person.

Simple Reflection

Client - But I can't quit using. I mean, all of my friends get high!

Counselor - *Quitting seems nearly impossible because you spend so much time with others who use.*

Client - Right, although maybe I shouldn't.

Double-sided reflection

With a double-sided reflection, the counselor reflects both the current, resistant statement, and a previous, contradictory statement that the client has made.

Double-sided Reflection

Client - But I can't quit using. I mean, all of my friends get high!

Counselor - *You can't imagine how you could not get high with your friends, and at the same time you're worried about how it's affecting you.*

Client - Yes. I guess I have mixed feelings.

Amplified reflection

This is similar to a simple reflection, only the counselor amplifies or exaggerates the point to the point where the client may disagree with it. It is important that the counselor not overdo it, because if the client feels mocked or patronized, he or she is likely to respond with anger.

Amplified Reflection

Client - But I can't quit using. I mean, all of my friends get high!

Counselor - *Oh, I see. So you really couldn't quit using because then you'd be too different to fit in with your friends and they might not accept the Anew you.@*

Client - Well, that would make me different from them, although they might not really care as long as I didn't try to pressure them to quit.

Shifting focus

Another way to reduce resistance is simply to shift topics. It is often not motivational to address resistant or counter-motivational statements, and counseling goals are better achieved by simply not responding to the resistant statement.

Shifting Focus

Client - But I can't quit using. I mean, all of my friends get high!

Counselor - *You're getting way ahead of things here. I'm not talking about your quitting here, and I don't think you should get stuck on that concern right now. Let's just stay with what we've been doing up to now - talking through the issues - and deal with what to do about them later.*

Client - Well, I wanted you to know.