

Motivational Interviewing in Practice

Demonstrating Empathy:

Client: “I just feel like I cannot lose any weight. It is so frustrating and it makes me want to just give up on the whole thing.”

Trainer: “Failure can be so frustrating. It beats us down and makes us feel inferior or not good enough. I completely understand. But I want you to know that you care good enough and that I believe you can lose weight. Why do you think you can’t lose weight?”

Listening to Their Concerns:

Trainer: “I wanted to check in with you because it has been a while since we last talked about all gaining 10 pounds of muscle. Is everything going okay?”

Client: “Not really, I am concerned about being able to afford all the food I will need to gain the weight.”

Trainer: “That is a complete legitimate concern. I don’t want you feeling financial pressure because of all the gains you are going after. Would you feel comfortable sitting down with me and doing a food budget and grocery list so that we can put you at ease about this?”

Sharing Experiences:

Client: “I screwed up so bad! I ate way too much at my sister’s wedding this weekend. I ruined everything.”

Trainer: “It is okay! I remember one time I ate half of a chocolate cake in the middle of the night after my birthday party. I felt horrible. It is normal to have screw ups. But it won’t be the end. Remember what you are going to gain when you lose all that weight. Just start over today and get back on track.”

Avoiding Passing Judgement or Assigning Blame:

Client: “I didn’t get my additional day of exercise in this weekend like we talked about. I felt so lazy.”

Trainer: “It is okay. Life gets in the way sometimes. You can always make up for it another day this week. It is never too late.”