



Resistance, Discord and Sustain Talk

Resistance

The Term “resistance” has long been used in the MI field to describe client behavior. It is problematic when used to describe our clients for several reasons:

1. The term labels the client and can cause judgment or stigma.
2. The term describes more about clinician than client.
3. The term is not useful in helping clinician to identify next steps.

In place of resistance, the new edition of MI breaks the term into two components: discord and sustain talk. By breaking the term down, it becomes less stigmatizing and facilitates clinician empathy and a better understanding of the client situation.

Sustain Talk

Sustain talk is quite simply arguments for the status quo and against change. Many times, sustain talk is the path of least resistance - the easiest and default option. It should be understandable then that sustain talk is very common among both our clients talk and in our own talk. If the clinician is not adept at helping a client work through sustain talk, the clinician can easily become frustrated which can be a cause of discord.

Discord

Discord is interpersonal behavior that reflects dissonance in the working relationship between the client and clinician. There can be many reasons for discord, and it is the clinician’s role to work to manage discord and create a therapeutic alliance. Some examples of discord include arguing, interrupting, discounting, or ignoring.

Activity

Please think of 2 sustain talk and 2 statements of discord that you hear frequently from clients. (5 mins)

Sustain

- 1)
- 2)

Discord

- 1)
- 2)



Responding to Sustain Talk

Sustain talk: Any client speech that favors status quo rather than movement toward a change goal.

S traight Reflection	
A mplified Reflection	
D ouble Sided Reflection	
R eframing	
A greeing With a Twist	
C oming Alongside	
E mphasizing Autonomy	



Discord Dodge Ball Directions

1. I am going to divide the group into two teams.
2. Each team will take turns throwing the ball, each team will take turns catching the ball.
3. The team that throws the ball will say a statement of sustain talk or discord (taken from your worksheet); the team that catches the ball will respond (using skill listed on worksheet or on ball).

