

Motivational Interviewing Skills **Worksheet**

Let's try out some motivational interviewing scenarios! The first scenario demonstrates **what not to do** while the second demonstrates **what to do** by utilizing a motivational interviewing approach to address the topic of youth vaping.

Pay special attention to the various uses of OARS skills, and how change talk is elicited throughout the second scenario. As you read through these scenarios, ask yourself questions like:

1. Would the student ask the teacher for help again in the future?
2. What would you expect in terms of the student following through and taking steps to change their behaviour?
3. Which one felt like a dance, which one felt like wrestling?
4. How did asking permission improve the interaction?
5. How did providing advice impact the interaction?

WHAT NOT TO DO	
Student:	Mr. Smith, do you have a minute?
Teacher:	Make it quick, I have a meeting in 5 minutes.
Student:	Ok, it shouldn't take long I just wanted you to know that I really like this class but wanted to apologize for all the times that I've been late these past few weeks.
Teacher:	Yep, 7 out of 10 days late actually. I was just looking at the attendance. Should I make a referral to guidance to help get you on track?
Student:	Sorry about that. No well, that's the thing. Could I just talk to you about it?
Teacher:	Sure, we have 4 minutes now.
Student:	Well, I kind of get side tracked along the way.
Teacher:	Sidetracked? That's why you're late all the time?
Student:	Yeah. Ever since I got that ticket for vaping in the bathroom, I've been heading outside during breaks between classes but there never seems to be enough time to fit it in. Now I feel like I'm missing the beginning of several classes where a lot of the time, the most important information is shared at the beginning of class. It's starting to catch up to me.
Teacher:	Sounds like you had to learn the hard way by getting a ticket. Even on the announcements, they said they were cracking down and you still got one. You shouldn't be vaping at all. Don't you know those things aren't good for your health?
Student:	With all the flavours it doesn't really seem to be that harmful.
Teacher:	Well, if you can't get to class on time then it is definitely affecting you. Why are you vaping anyway?
Student:	Well, like I said, it tastes good. My friend Jen and I...
Teacher:	Let me cut you off right there. What would you do if Jen asked you to jump off a bridge.
Student:	Well, I wouldn't. I'm afraid of...
Teacher:	But she got you starting vaping, didn't she?
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WHAT NOT TO DO	
Student:	No. It wasn't like that.
Teacher:	Let me give you some advice. Don't take things that can harm you. Get to class on time and be a leader not a follower. Got it?
Student:	Be a leader?
Teacher:	Exactly. I'm glad we had this talk. See you tomorrow. On time, right?
Student:	Right.
Teacher:	Uh huh.

TRY THIS INSTEAD	
Student:	Mr. Smith, do you have a minute?
Teacher:	Of course, Jim, what's on your mind?
	✓ Open ended question
Student:	I just wanted you to know that I really like this class but wanted to apologize for all the times that I've been late these past few weeks.
Teacher::	I'm happy to hear that you're liking the class so far. I have noticed you being late recently. What can we do to assist you in getting to class on time?
	✓ Reflective listening, open ended question, exploring "the what" rather than "the why"
Student:	Well, that's the thing. I don't think there's anything I can do. You know how I have gym right before this class and there's only a 5-minute break to get from the far end of the school to here?
Teacher:	It's not a lot of time to get changed and get here
	✓ Reflective listening
Student:	Well, I kind of get sidetracked along the way.
Teacher:	Tell me what do you mean by sidetracked?
	✓ Reflective listening, open ended question
Student:	Yeah. Ever since I got that ticket for vaping in the bathroom, I've been heading outside during breaks between classes, but there never seems to be enough time to fit it in. Now I feel like I'm missing the beginning of several classes where a lot of the time, the most important information is shared at the beginning of class. It's starting to catch up to me.
Teacher:	Let me see if I understand you correctly. On one hand, you're feeling pressure to get to class on time as you're missing some key material, but on the other hand, you're having to get outside of the building to vape as you're trying to avoid getting another ticket. Do I have that right?
	✓ Summaries
Student:	That's exactly what's happening. Before, I'd just vape in the bathroom, and I could get here on time, but after getting that ticket and learning about the laws...
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TRY THIS INSTEAD	
Teacher:	Yes, the laws are clear. I'm sorry that you received a ticket for that. You should be commended for learning from that experience and making efforts to take it outside instead.
	✓ Affirmations
Student:	Yeah, like the ticket wasn't fun but I don't really want people to think of me as if I'm a horrible person who likes to break all the rules or something.
Teacher:	As an older student here, you are concerned about how people view you?
	✓ Complex reflection, getting below the surface to better understand meaning.
Student:	Yeah.
Teacher:	So, what do you think you'll do?
	✓ Open ended question
Student:	Haha, I was hoping you'd tell me what to do?
Teacher:	I want to thank you for coming to me today to have this conversation and asking for my advice. One thing I've learned is that students have more insight into what's going on with them, than I would, as an outsider. First, would it be ok if I just listened to some of your thoughts on how you could try to solve this issue? That can help me better understand your perspective.
	✓ Affirmations, asking permission, leading with compassion, working together, and fighting the righting reflex to solve the problem for them.
Student:	That makes sense. I guess I'm finding myself in a jam. School is important and I want to do well, but if I don't vape between breaks, I find I have trouble focussing, as I can't sit still and feel all jittery and restless. Plus, the break times are the only times in the day I get to talk to Jen, because we don't have any classes together this year.
Teacher:	So, I'm hearing that vaping is helping you to be more focused and you get to spend time with your friend
	✓ Reflective listening, helps students to move away from 'sustain talk' to 'elicit change' talk
Student:	Yeah, I guess it's not really helpful, is it? If it's causing me to miss classes so much?
Teacher:	That's an important point. I don't really know too much about vaping, but do you mind if I share with you something that I read about it?
	✓ Reinforcing change talk, asking permission, leading with compassion
Student:	Of course.
Teacher:	Well, most vaping devices being sold today contain nicotine which is a highly addictive substance that poses some challenges and risks. Can you describe your experiences with vaping?
	✓ Open ended question
Student:	My current one has nicotine for sure. This past month, I'm using my device daily from first thing in the morning till late at night. Since I bought the large style that you don't have to charge, it seems like I'm using it all the time.
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TRY THIS INSTEAD	
Teacher:	It's sounds like you're noticing some patterns. What else have you noticed this past month with the extra vaping?
	✓ Reflection, open ended question, eliciting change talk
Student:	I've been spending a ton of money, that's for sure. It takes up a lot of time too because I have to go outside to do it...some days, I go out like every hour. My lap times during gym are getting slower too. I think the vaping is affecting my lungs.
Teacher:	From what you're telling me, it sounds like that there are a lot of reasons why vaping isn't helping you. It seems to be costing you a lot of money, time and even your health.
	✓ Summary
Student:	I wish I never even started with these stupid things.
Teacher:	And now you regret ever starting?
	✓ Reflection
Student:	(pause) Yeah.
Teacher:	I don't want to tell you what to do, but have you thought about what not vaping would look like for you?
	✓ Eliciting change talk, commitment to change
Student:	I haven't really thought about that before. It kind of creeped up on me, you know?
Teacher:	Uh huh.
Student:	I guess it would kind of solve everything, wouldn't it? I would be in class on time. I could protect my lungs more; you know how important sports are for me? With the extra money, Jen and I could do more things after school too. She hasn't vaped at all this past week. I wonder if it would be a good idea if we stopped together?
Teacher:	It sounds like you can almost picture yourself without vaping and see all the benefits you could receive. Save your money for other things, protecting your health, and supporting a friend and yourself.
	✓ Summarizing
Student:	Yeah, it kind of seems like the right thing to do when I really put it all out there.
Teacher:	You're in luck. I don't know a lot about this topic and how to best quit vaping, but I have the contact information for someone who does.
	✓ Asking permission, leading with compassion
Student:	Thanks
Teacher:	Thanks again for coming to me today, but more importantly for taking steps to make some important changes about your vaping. I am here anytime you want to talk further.
	✓ Affirmations
Student:	Thanks, is it ok if I share with you how I do?
Teacher:	Of course, and if you need some help with the content you missed, maybe we can go over that tomorrow.