

Nutrition Assessment

Skill Building

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A.I.M. for Change (*Awakening Inner Motivation*)

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Listen with:

- Presence—undivided attention
- Eyes, ears, and heart—use all of your senses
- Acceptance & non-judgment
- Curiosity
- Delight
- No interruptions
- Silence
- Encouragers (e.g., mm-hmm, I see, go on, oh, really, right, no way, what else, wow, **tell me more**)
- **Reflection**
- Summary

Client-centered Style

- **Empathic:** seeking to understand things from the client's perspective
- **Warm & friendly**
- **Curious & inquisitive**
- **Collaborative:** sharing power and control; working together in partnership; pursuing common goals; dancing rather than wrestling.
- **Positive and hopeful:** confident in the human spirit to grow and change in positive directions
- **Accepting/Non-judgmental**

The paradox of change: when a person feels accepted for who they are and what they do—no matter how unhealthy—it allows them the freedom to consider change rather than needing to defend against it.

- **Individualized:** tailors intervention approach to match a client's own situation and readiness of change
- **Respectful:** asks permission before raising a topic, addressing concerns, offering advice, or providing education
- **Eliciting:** Encourages the client to do most of the talking
- **Honoring of autonomy:** respects the client's freedom of choice, personal control, perspective, and ability to make decisions

Key Skills

1. Establish Rapport

- Warm, friendly greeting (smile!)
- Introduce yourself and your role
- State the appointment length
- Explain the reason for the visit
- Seek permission
- Ask a general open-ended question (e.g., “*How’s your pregnancy going?*”)

2. Ask Assessment Questions

Closed-ended Questions

- Can be answered with “yes” or “no” or short answers

Open-ended Questions!

- Supports client in doing most of the talking
- Encourages client to speak about thoughts, feelings, experiences, and motivations
- Assists in identifying nutrition risks
- Better for increasing motivation

3. Encourage elaboration

- Ask for clarification: *In what ways? How much? When?*
- Ask for a specific example
- Ask: “*What else?*”

4. Listen, listen, listen

What people need is a good listening to. - Mary Lou Casey

- Offer brief summaries: *reflect what you hear!*

❖ Non-verbal Body Language

- Establish—and maintain—eye contact
- Facial expression is pleasant, open
- Body posture is open, forward
- Voice tone is warm, pleasant
- Rate of speech is not too slow or too fast
- Spatial proximity is not too close or too distant

5. Affirm

Seek every opportunity to affirm, compliment, and reinforce:

- Honesty and participation
- Past successes, future hopes
- Struggles and desires
- Current or past efforts to improve things
- The humanity, character, spirit of the client

Examples:

I appreciate you hanging in there through this assessment...

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions...

You've been through a lot, and I respect your commitment to be the best parent you can be...

You really have some good ideas for how you might eat more fruits & vegetables...

Congratulations on quitting smoking...

Practice

1. Establish Rapport

- Name
- Role
- Time
- Agenda
- Permission

For example:

My name is _____. I'm a _____.

We have about _____ minutes to meet, and our visit today is going to seem a bit different from other WIC appointments. We have a new way of asking questions, and I'm going to begin by asking you these questions and then we'll come back and address any concerns or questions you may have.

How does that sound?

- **Acknowledge 'personal questions'**

Before we begin I want you to know that some of the questions I'll be asking are personal, and I encourage you to answer them as honestly as seems right to you. Let me know if you're not sure what I'm asking, or what I mean by a particular question.

- **Ask a general open-ended question**

For example:

"How's your pregnancy going?"

"How's your baby doing?"

"What do you think of the conference so far?"

2. Ask Assessment Questions

- **Be clear, succinct, and non-judgmental!**

Do you have any health problems or medical conditions?

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

Have you had any recent surgeries such as a C-section?

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

- *Have you ever had a surgery that affects how you eat now?*

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

Are you on any medications?

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

What vitamins or other dietary supplements do you take?

- *How much do you take?*

- *Are you taking a folic acid supplement?*

Do you have any problems with your teeth or gums, or unfilled cavities?

- *(If yes) Tell me more*

Next, I have a set of questions that we ask everyone. These questions have to do with your health and safety.

Do you smoke?

- *(If yes) How much?*

Does anyone smoke inside your home?

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

When was the last time you drank alcohol?

- *How much do you drink? How often?*

Do you smoke marijuana or use other street drugs?

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

Recently, have you felt sad or depressed?

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

- *(If yes) Are you being treated for depression? (i.e. medications, counseling)*

Is there anyone in your life who is hurting you or your child(ren)?

- *(If yes) Tell me more.*

3. Close the Assessment

- **Extend gratitude:** Sincerely thank the client for their honesty and willingness to answer the questions!

For example:

“That’s it! Nice work! Thanks for your honesty and willingness to answer the questions?”