

The “OARS” Key Communication Skills in Coaching

- O- Open Questions
- A- Affirmations
- R – Reflections
- S - Summarizing



Open Questions

Closed questions limit evocation

le. Do you feel good about that?

Open questions evoke the client's thoughts, feelings, values, perspectives, and change talk.

le. How do you feel about that?



Affirmations

Praise is okay, but recognizing and respecting strengths, insights, and actions is more powerful.

Praise examples:

“Good work.” “Nice!” “Well done.”

Affirming strengths examples:

“Your self-awareness is growing.” “Your resilience is paying off. You found a solution that works for you.”



Reflections

Client: "It was not a good week. I had a conference and I have my kid's soccer tournament next week, so I signed up for two classes at the gym next week."

Simple reflections repeat back what the client said.

Coach: You plan to go to two classes next week.

Complex reflection takes a guess at the implicit meaning of what the client is saying.

Coach: You learned from your hectic schedule last week. You want to see if scheduling classes is a more helpful strategy.



Summarizing

- A longer reflection that tries to fit together what the client is saying and bridge to evoking more.
 - Example: You want to visit your niece in France in a year. You want to be able to climb up the castle steps and be physically able to do all the spontaneous touring. You're thinking about retiring. What else comes up when you think how you want your life to be a year from now?
 - Example: You're dedicated to your family. They rely on you. You are committed to and love your work. You're funny. You have a great sense of humor. What other strengths do you have?



OARS Practice

“I’m on antibiotics. I think I was pretty proud, proud is the word I’d use, that I had biked every day consistently for a little over four weeks. Like, okay, listen this is a cool thing, but then it’s like there goes my trend.”



OARS Practice

“I remember thinking food is a primary reward for me. I think what else is there? There are a lot of areas where I am delaying gratification but with the exception of food.”





OARS Practice

"I want to be able to walk and hike and see things without being like "ah, the pain."

OARS Practice

Diabetic client: “I just went downstairs. I had fifteen minutes and I meal prepped for a stir fry. I got myself three protein snacks. I got to make more eggs because I ate the last one last night. I’ve got eggs, mozzarella cheese sticks, and I also made a crock pot of chicken.”



OARS Practice

“I went to Aldi, and they had a nice mix of fresh vegetables because that makes all the difference.”



OARS Practice

“My doctor had said to do 10 minutes after each meal. (Now) He said, you’ve been going to Planet Fitness for 10 minutes after each meal, none of that’s going to do anything for weight for you, and you got to lose the weight, so he didn’t go into it, but I’m implying that it’s the food or something, you know?”

