



Readiness rulers

Why?

- Readiness rulers are a simple 1-10 visual scale that helps assess motivation. They measure a young person's belief in the importance of change and confidence in their ability to change
- They help to elicit 'Change Talk' and inform the clinicians of where to focus MI
- Readiness ruler's work best when the person is contemplative or planning and they have some idea of the change they want to make e.g. quit, vs cut down.

How?

Explain things: "There are two things that determine how successful you will be in making a change or achieving a goal; how important it is to you and how confident you feel in doing it. This exercise helps us to know where you're at, if this is the right goal for you, and what might be most helpful."

Assess importance of change: "Here's a ruler from 1-10. Mark on it how important it is for you to make a change in your substance use, with 1 being '**not important at all**' and 10 is "**totally need to do this now.**" They may want to rate different substances separately.

Elicit 'change talk' by asking for reasons why their rating is not one point lower. Whatever answer they give be surprised and curious as to why it isn't lower, e.g. [if 4]: "Wow, a 4, that's great, but I'm wondering, what makes it a '4' and not a '3'?" – "So, one reason it's important is... [record reasons below chosen number on ruler] - What else?" Keep asking until you have an extensive list. If they are struggling to come up with reasons you can reflect on previously mentioned reasons.

Assess confidence about changing: "Here's another ruler from 1-10. Mark on it how confident you are that you could make a change if you wanted to." Repeat as above, enquiring about why it isn't one point lower. Be aware of importance reasons being repeated and clarify the difference. If they struggle to name reasons, reflect previously mentioned successes or achievements.

Elicit factors that would increase their importance by 1 point, and following this, their confidence by 1 point, e.g. "What would make it more important? What would it take to get from a 4 to a 5?" "How would you know when you're at (one higher)?" Record responses under that number on the ruler.

Ask what they make of this and reflect and summarise what you notice.

Then...

If importance is low:

- Clarify the goal to something more relevant.
- If the young person does not believe it is important to change substance use at all, present the Stages of Change diagram and discuss what stage the young person is in. Advise the young person that it is common to move back and forth between stages. Offer harm-minimisation information for the drugs they are using. Ask them if there is anything they would like to change (e.g. mental health symptoms).

**If confidence is low:**

- Again, the goal may need to be altered to something more achievable.
- Change the focus to recognising existing skills, previous small successes and teaching new skills.

Importance ruler

“How important is it for you to make a change in your substance use?”

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all important				Somewhat important			Very important		

Confidence ruler

“How confident are you that you could change your substance use?”

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all confident				Somewhat confident			Very confident		