Ten Strategies for Evoking Change Talk

1. Ask Evocative Questions – Use Open-Ended Questions
   *Examples:*
   - Why would you want to make this change? (Desire)
   - How might you go about it, in order to succeed? (Ability)
   - What are the three best reasons for you to do it? (Reasons)
   - How important is it for you to make this change? (Need)
   - So what do you think you’ll do? (Commitment)

2. Ask for Elaboration
   *When a change talk theme emerges, ask for more detail:*
   - In what ways?
   - How do you see this happening?
   - What have you changed in the past that you can relate to this issue?

3. Ask for Examples
   *When a change talk theme emerges, ask for specific examples.*
   - When was the last time that happened?
   - Describe a specific example of when this happens.
   - What else?

4. Looking Back
   *Ask about a time before the current concern emerged:*
   - How have things been better in the past?
   - What past events can you recall when things were different?

5. Look Forward
   *Ask about how the future is viewed:*
   - What may happen if things continue as they are (status quo).
   - If you were 100% successful in making the changes you want, what would be different?
   - How would you like your life to be in the future?

6. Query Extremes
   *Ask about the best and worst case scenarios to elicit additional information:*
   - What are the worst things that might happen if you don't make this change?
   - What are the best things that might happen if you do make this change?

7. Use Change Rulers
   *Ask open questions about where the client sees themselves on a scale from 1 – 10.*
   - On a scale where one is not at all important, and ten is extremely important, how important (need) is it to you to change ______?  
     - Follow up: Explain why are you at a ___ and not (lower number)?
Addendum Tip Sheets for Evoking “Change Talk” with Patients

- What might happen that could move you from ____ to a _____[higher number]?
- How much you want (desire),
- How confident you are that you could (ability),
- How committed are you to ____ (commitment).

8. Explore Goals and Values
   *Ask what the person’s guiding values are.*
   - What do they want in life?
   - What values are most important to you? (Using a values card sort can be helpful here).
   - How does this behavior fit into your value system?
   - What ways does ________ (the behavior) conflict with your value system?

9. Come Alongside
   *Explicitly side with the negative (status quo) side of ambivalence.*
   - Perhaps _____________ is so important to you that you won’t give it up, no matter what the cost.
   - It may not be the main area that you need to focus on in our work together.