

Information sheet

Summarising for change

A summary is very useful in allowing you to recap on some of the key points of the conversation to date. It allows you to think about what's important and allows the young person to respond so that you know you're both at the same point. It also gives you valuable thinking time about how to progress. In motivational dialogue we use summary for change. We spend more time in the summary on the reasons for change, so that the young person understands what we're trying to do. We need to concentrate on our tone and the way we say things – making sure we emphasise the importance of any key aspects that we cover. Reasons for change should be mentioned mainly at the end of the summary.

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The difference between a summary and a summary for change

A summary is an extended form of reflective listening – and a summary for change is a particular form of summary.

When you do a summary, the following structure is helpful.

- Tell the learner that you are about to do a summary and explain why.

For example:

“Let's just stop there a moment, so that I can see if I've got this straight.”

- From what the learner has said, pick out what you think are the most important points and list them in your summary. If the learner had expressed ambivalence, include this.

For example:

“You've said [...] and [...] You also mentioned that on the one hand you're nervous about doing a placement, but on the other you believe that it would help you eventually get a job.”

- Check with the learner whether you have missed anything that is important to them.

For example:

“Have I missed anything?” Or: “Is there anything you want to add to that?”

- If you are doing a summary at what seems to be a natural break in the conversation, invite the learner to make meaning from what you have said.

For example:

“What does all this mean to you?” Or: “What do you make of all this?”

When you do a summary, you will:

- pay less attention to the things a learner has said that do not support change. You can do this by moving through them quite quickly, at the start of your summary;
- pay more attention to the behaviours and attitudes that support change. You can do this by mentioning them at the end of your summary, and by speaking more slowly and emphatically.

You will want to acknowledge the positive things a learner tells you, but you might want to bias your summary towards the issues that still need to be addressed. So a summary for change is not just a matter of ending with the positive things a learner has said. It is a way of focusing attention on whatever you believe will support change.

Watch out for ...

When you are doing a summary for change, take care to include only what the learner has already said. A summary for change is not an opportunity for you to add in your own version of events.

*Ted Daszkiewicz and Paul Lalgée supported the development of the ‘motivational dialogue’ resources for the Standards Unit E2E resources. The resources are based on:

Miller W.R. and Rollnick S., *Motivational interviewing: preparing people for change*, 2nd edition, New York, Guilford Publications, Inc.

Further information can also be found at: www.motivationalinterview.org