

Conversation Tips (originally shared on coachingforhealth.org during the COVID-19 pandemic; please feel free to use and adapt to your situation)

Supporting patients to identify their own resources/resourcefulness

At this time of limited capacity, we need to be able to support patients to be their own best resources, whenever that's possible.

This can of course be tricky, particularly if the individual is feeling understandably anxious given their situation. So first you may need to build rapport with excellent active listening about their situation and reflecting back to make sure they feel heard.

Then there are two different Coaching for Health tips you can try:

To help the patient identify their own resources and solutions, you can use **TGROW**.

Topic

You may need to 'contract' (i.e. agree) the topic of the conversation e.g. '**Would it be OK if we had a conversation about your situation and any support that might be helpful?**' Make sure you get a yes.

Goal

You may need to elicit their priorities/values by asking: '**What's important to you right now?**' and to bring the conversation to what they could do, you can ask: '**What might be within your control?**'

Reality

If we've built rapport, we don't necessarily need to hear a great deal about their situation (as when Coaching, they're the experts) and so we can ask them about either their **Barriers** or the **Resources** they could call upon (e.g. what's worked for them in the past).

Options

With a specific Goal, you can ask for their Options, and if they run out, Ask Permission to provide Options you're aware of.

What Next

When you have all their Options, you can ask them about their next step to help them build momentum.

If you experience resistance at any stage, remember you can always go up the stages. For example, if the patient can't identify Options, perhaps because they're feeling anxious, maybe you need to change the Goal to managing their anxiety and ideas they have about this.

The second approach is to use the **Challenge Sandwich**, either to introduce the notion of the patient using their own resources, or to deal with any resistance you experience in TGROW.

Set it up

- empathic statement
- ask permission
- shared value

Deliver content

- using subjective language
- rule, procedures, evidence

Check validity

- e.g. "...what do you think?"

1. Set it up

Building rapport through the following stages (you don't need to do all of them):

- Empathise/acknowledge - '***I hear this is a really difficult situation.***' (Here we acknowledge/validate their emotional concern - so please adapt to your patient.)
- Ask permission - '***Do you mind if I share my perspective?***' (Here we wait for the 'yes', or some acknowledgement, to make sure the individual has given themselves permission to hear you).
- Shared value - '***Because I really want to make sure you feel as supported as possible in this difficult time.***' (Here we're looking for a value that you both/all share, something you all care about).

2. Deliver content/your message

We have a choice to use either Subjective Language, or A Rule/Procedure (if it exists). For example:

- Rule/Procedure/Evidence - '***Unfortunately we're not able to provide the ____ support/service at this time... [here explain any rules/procedures necessary].***'
- Subjective language - '***In my experience, many people find it useful to identify what they can do to make the situation better, even in small ways, and I'm really happy to help you think this through.***'

You can of course use both together - a Rule followed by your Subjective experience.

3. Check Validity

Checking how this lands with someone:

- '***What do you think?***' OR '***What are your thoughts about this?***'