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## ADVICE GIVING

### How do I give advice in a way that is consistent with motivational interviewing?

As health professionals, we know things, and it makes sense that we want to tell our patients what we know. We tell people what to do in order to help them...

But, how often, particularly with health behaviour change, have you told someone what they need to do to fix it, only to have them come back next time without having made any changes?

Many of us do not like to be told what to do...and this is not a new concept, as the quote by Pascal makes clear.

*People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered, than by those which have come into the mind of others.*

Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, (1670)

In motivational interviewing, and in many other patient-centred approaches to advice giving, the following framework is used:

**ELICIT**  
Ask patients about their ideas, what they know, understand, or think.

What would you most like to know about...?

What ideas do you have about making a change...?

What do you understand about...?

By first eliciting what the patient knows, you can:

- hear the patient's language and use this language in offering advice
- listen for incorrect or missing information in the patient's understanding, and find ways to help them to understand
- hear their ideas, and reinforce what is helpful, based on the evidence

Seek permission

**PROVIDE**

- Information and a range of options, where possible
- Clarification of any misinformation
- Confirmation of patient's understanding or knowledge

Would it be okay if I provide you with some information that might be helpful?

**ELICIT**  
Ask patients what they think and feel about the information discussed, and/or what they might do.

Given all we've discussed, what are your thoughts now?

What might you do?

