

## EXERCISE 5.1 Identifying Change Talk

In the next few pages you will find interchanges between a practitioner and a client. In each case read the transcript and then underline what you view as change talk. Keep in mind that the client usually generates change talk, though clinician statements—if affirmed by the client—can also constitute change talk. After you've underlined these sheets, check your answers against the key.

### Exercise 5.1, Scenario 1 (Marijuana)

This is a young adult male, coming to treatment for a possible substance abuse issue, at the behest of his parents. The target behavior for change talk is substance use.

- P: Let me summarize what we've talked about so far. About 8 months ago you had a pretty serious cancer scare. You took some time off for chemotherapy and for awhile your life plans were put on hold. You're basically doing OK now; the cancer is in remission, and you're trying to get on with your life. Prior to this diagnosis you'd been in school—with kind of mixed results—but you were figuring out what was required of you to be successful, including smoking a little less pot. Your plan is to go back this fall. You also decided that for now you'll stay at home to help cover costs, but this also means that you have to follow your parents' rules, which is causing some friction. Did I miss anything?
- C: No.
- P: Now, I understand that one of your parents' concerns is pot smoking, and they've laid down the law about that with you. Tell me about that.
- C: Well, what do you want to know about it?
- P: What's been happening with the pot smoking? What's making your parents concerned? That sort of thing . . .
- C: Well, I didn't drink or smoke pot until I was a senior in high school. Then I started drinking about halfway through the year—you know, going out on weekends, partying with friends. Then I started smoking some pot. At first, it was the same way—just weekends—but then I started doing it most every day. It was safer than drinking and driving. Pretty soon I decided I'd better start cutting back, so I tried that. Then I decided to stop for awhile, and I did a couple of times for a month or 2, then I tried to smoke just socially, but that didn't work very well. Then I got sick and so I didn't do anything for awhile, but now it started again. So, when my parents said I could smoke once a week I was a little surprised, but I also know it won't work for me. I can't smoke socially. I need to stop entirely, so that's what I'm doing. I haven't smoked in about a week.
- P: You're pretty clear that this is something that needs to change and, in fact, you were already picking up on this back in high school.
- C: Shortly after high school.
- P: How about the drinking? Where do you stand with that now?

(cont.)

From *Building Motivational Interviewing Skills: A Practitioner Workbook* by David B. Rosengren. Copyright 2009 by The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this exercise is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see copyright page for details).

**Identifying Change Talk, Scenario 1 (Marijuana) (p. 2 of 2)**

- C: Well, I plan to continue drinking, but I'm not going to pick up where the smoking left off. My drinking has never been like my pot smoking. I never did it every day or anything. I mean, occasionally we'd go out. And I work at a restaurant and so we have a couple of drinks after work sometimes, and I don't see anything wrong with that.
- P: OK. So you are clear that the smoking needs to change—and I'd still like to hear a little more about what led you to that decision—but you're not so sure that the drinking needs to change.
- C: Yeah, it's just not that big of a deal.
- P: It's not much of a thing.
- C: Right.
- P: Let me summarize what we've talked about so far. You ...