

## OARS in Motivational Interviewing: Leveraging Faith and Spirituality



O.A.R.S. is a set of 4 basic communication skills which can help leverage faith and spirituality during Motivational Interviewing (MI):

O = Open-Ended Questions

A = Affirmations

R = Reflective Listening

S = Summarizing

These skills can be useful in bringing faith and spirituality into MI.

### Open-Ended Questions

Establish a safe environment where issues of faith and spirituality can be discussed openly. Gain an understanding of the client's faith and spirituality within their world. The client should do most of the talking.

Examples:

1. *How has your faith helped you cut back on your drinking in the past?*
2. *You mentioned that you went to church. How can your church help you with this?*

### Affirmations

Show appreciation of the client's beliefs, values, and motivations. Look for ways in which the client is striving to move forward in life.

Examples:

1. *You really seem like you are giving all you can to live out your faith.*
2. *I can tell that you are truly devoted to prayer.*

### Reflective Listening

Demonstrate that you are listening to everything they say. Reflect back their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Examples:

1. (Showing signs of ambivalence) *So, although you'd like to cut back on your drinking, you're worried this time will not be different, because you prayed to change in the past and you're not sure it made a difference.*
2. (Showing signs of embarrassment) *I'm wondering if you're feeling embarrassed because you think you shouldn't have a drinking problem as a Christian.*
3. *It seems that you would like to find more support in your religious community but you might be hesitant about how people in your church would view you.*

### Summarizing

Help the client understand their own thoughts and experiences in a coherent manner. Bring the client's faith and spirituality into the change plan.

Suggestions:

1. Acknowledge the role faith and spirituality play in client's motivation to change.
2. Discuss openly the resources and liabilities that faith and spirituality may bring.
3. Include faith and spirituality in the change plan for the client.