

Using Motivational Interviewing to Respond to Discord/Ambivalence about Means Restriction

Caregiver statements

“I trust my child and am not concerned about this.”

- You put a lot of trust in your child to make good decisions. **(Reflection)**
- May I share with you some information that parents of some of my other teens have found helpful? **(Asking permission to share information/Give advice)**
 - Teens are operating with a brain that is still developing. It’s hard to believe but the human brain doesn’t fully develop until around the age of 25-26. The last part of the brain to fully develop is the decision-making part of the brain. So even the smartest and most trustworthy teens are bound to have lapses in judgment simply because of the way they are wired.
 - I’m wondering what signs you might look for in your teen to know that they might be struggling or acting more impulsively than is typical for them? **(Open question)**
- You trust your child because they have proven to be a good decision maker and trustworthy. Safety in your home is not a concern for you at this time. You also know that all teens are susceptible to impulsivity simply because of the developing brain. **(Summary)** You know your child better than anyone so deciding if and when these safety precautions make sense is up to you and your family **(Partnership, Emphasizing personal choice and control).**

“This seems like a lot to expect of our household.”

- This would be a big change for your household. **(Reflection)**
- You are doing the best you can when it comes to making your home safe. **(Reflection)**
- Of what we’ve discussed today, are there things that feel more difficult to implement? What about things that might feel less challenging to implement? **(Open Question)**
- Is there anything that we’ve discussed today that you might be willing to try? **(Open Question)**

“Even if things are safe at home, if they really want to die or hurt themselves, they’ll find a way.”

- There is so much that you can’t control in terms of your child’s safety outside of your home. **(Reflection)**
- That’s true. Some kids do find things outside of their own homes to hurt themselves or make an attempt on their life. Would you mind if I shared some information about what we know about this? **(Reflection-Coming alongside, Partnership, Asking permission to share information/Give advice)**
 - You are right, some kids do remain suicidal even after their first method of choice is unavailable and will seek out other methods. However, more often than not, those “secondary” methods are less lethal giving loved ones more time to intervene. Also, sometimes simply having that gap in time gives the child time to cool down from the crisis and make a safer choice that doesn’t involve self-harm or a suicide attempt.
 - What do you think about that information? **(Open Question)**

“The world is so unsafe these days. I need my weapon for protection.”

- Your main priority is keeping yourself and your family safe. **(Reflection, Affirmation)**

- What steps/suggestions that we've discussed seem more manageable to you at this time? **(Open Question)**
- It feels too vulnerable for you to not have ready access to your gun and also know that having access to a weapon in the home significantly increases the risk of death from suicide. **(Reflection)**
- What are some ways that you think you can both feel safe yourself and ways you can protect your child when they are in crisis? **(Partnership, Evocation, Open Question)**

“I don't really believe my child would harm themselves. I think they just want attention.”

- I'd like to hear more about that. **(Evocation)**
- You feel confident that your child would not kill themselves and you know they have made suicide attempts previously. **(Reflection)**
- It's difficult as a parent who clearly loves their child to consider that they might be capable of taking their own life. **(Reflection)**
 - **This type of reflection is nuanced and can be tricky but can produce a nice conversation. This type of response from a caregiver might be self-preservation- it's too painful or scary to consider losing their child. Using empathy and understanding in this situation is imperative.*

“What do you know about weapons? You probably don't even own one.”

- You're wondering how someone who might not understand firearms as you do could possibly be giving you guidance on this right now. **(Reflection, Partnership)**
- Who is someone you might trust to talk about this? **(Open Question, Partnership)**

Patient Statements

“If they lock up the gun, I'll just find something else.”

- You may be right about that. When someone is in the kind of emotional pain that you've described, you may feel desperate for relief. **(Reflection)**
- What do you think would happen if you went to get your parent's gun and it was locked or not there? **(Open Question)**

“This feels like I am being treated like a baby.”

- Safety proofing feels like something parents are supposed to do when you're a little kid and you also know it's your parents' job to protect you at any age. **(Reflection- Agreement with a Twist)**
- What do you think needs to happen in order to ensure we can keep you safe during difficult times? **(Open Question, Partnership)**