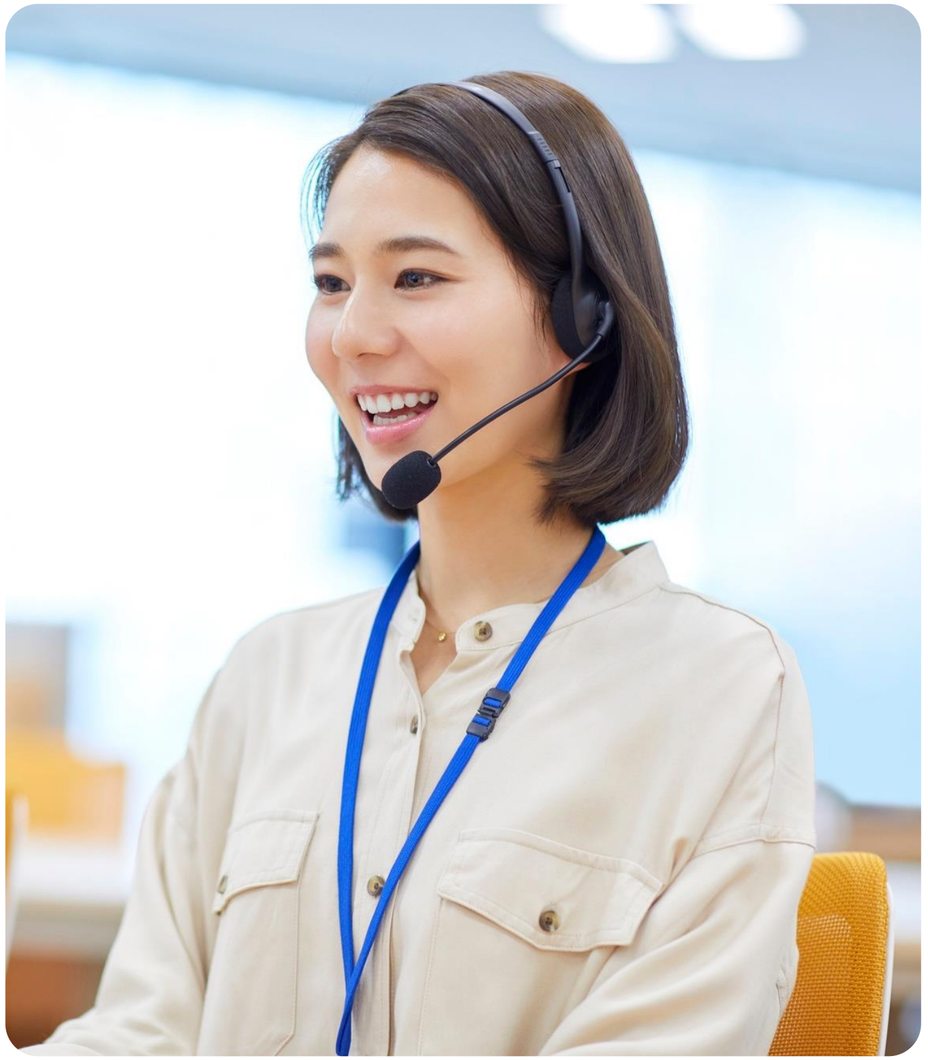


JOB TRAINING
& Economic Development

CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN

icsps

Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support,
Illinois State University, College of Education

Presented by Aimeé Julian and Jalissa Jones—
ICSPS
October 2026

AGENDA

- Customer Centered Design Explained
- Critical Motivational Interviewing Skills





CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN

places the participant at the center of everything we do, recognizing that each individual has unique strengths, needs, goals, and challenges. By working collaboratively with our participants, focusing on their strengths, and empowering them to make informed choices, we can help them achieve sustainable employment and long-term success. Every customer can find efficient and streamlined workforce services that meet their needs, goals, and challenges regardless of their entry point.

CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN REASONING

This shift requires us to move away from a one-size-fits-all model and embrace a more flexible, individualized approach. It means actively listening to our participants, understanding their perspectives, and tailoring our services to meet their specific needs. It also involves connecting them with the holistic support they require to overcome barriers and thrive.

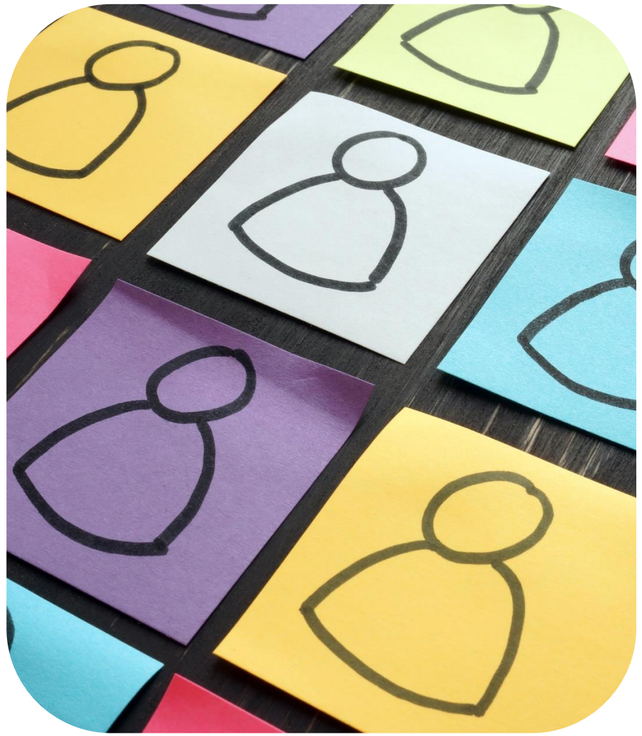
To support this effort, DCEO has developed new policies and a new case management system that integrate a customer-centered approach into the policy and technology frameworks underpinning our system.



KEY ELEMENTS OF A CUSTOMER-CENTERED APPROACH

- Individualized Services: Recognizing that each participant has distinct circumstances, skills, and barriers. Moving away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach to create customized service plans.
- Respect and Dignity: Treating every participant with respect, empathy, and understanding. Valuing their unique perspectives and experiences.
- Empowerment and Choice: Providing participants with the information and support they need to make informed decisions about their career path and service options.
- Collaboration and Partnership: Working *with* the participant, not just *for* them. Engaging in a shared process of goal-setting, planning, and service delivery.
- Strengths-Based Approach: Focusing on the participant's assets, skills, and capabilities, rather than solely on their deficits. Building upon what they *can* do to overcome challenges.
- Holistic Support: Addressing the range of factors that can affect a participant's success, including employment, education, and support services (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing).
- Continuous Improvement: Regularly seeking and incorporating feedback from participants to improve service delivery and ensure that services are meeting their needs.

WHY A CUSTOMER-CENTERED APPROACH MATTERS



Adopting a customer-centered approach benefits participants, career planners, and the Illinois workforce system as a whole.

- Benefits for Participants
- Increased Engagement: When participants feel heard and respected, they are more likely to be actively involved in their own success.
- Improved Outcomes: Services tailored to individual needs are more effective in helping participants achieve their goals.
- Enhanced Confidence: Recognizing and building upon their strengths empowers participants and increases their self-efficacy.
- Greater Satisfaction: Participants who feel valued and supported are more satisfied with the services they receive.
- Long-Term Success: By addressing root causes and empowering individuals, this approach leads to more sustainable employment and economic self-sufficiency.

BENEFITS FOR CAREER PLANNERS

Stronger Relationships: Building trust and rapport with participants creates more positive and productive working relationships.

Increased Job Satisfaction: Helping participants achieve their goals is rewarding and contributes to a sense of professional fulfillment.

Efficient Service Delivery: Understanding individual needs from the outset allows for more targeted and effective use of resources.

Increased Completion Rates: When participants are engaged and receiving effective support, they are less likely to drop out of the program.

Better Communication: Participants are more likely to openly communicate their challenges and needs, leading to more effective problem-solving.

BENEFITS FOR THE WIOA SYSTEM

Improved Performance: Higher participant engagement and better outcomes contribute to the achievement of WIOA performance measures.

Enhanced Reputation: Positive participant experiences enhance the credibility and reputation of the WIOA program.

Stronger Partnerships: A customer-centered approach encourages collaboration with other agencies and community organizations to provide comprehensive support.

Optimal Resource Allocation: Focusing on individual needs ensures that resources are used effectively and efficiently.

FIVE CRITICAL MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING SKILLS TO MASTER

- Asking Open-Ended Questions
- Giving Affirmations
- Asking Permission
- Using Reflective Listening
- Summarizing the Agreements



HOW CAN WE EVOKE CHANGE TALK?



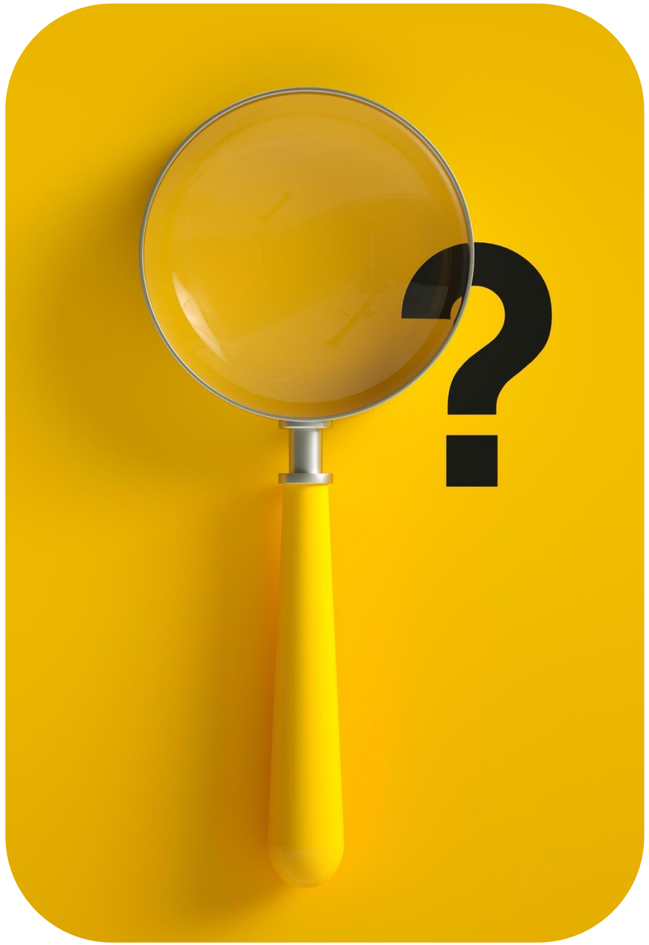


OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

elicit more extended answers and:

- allow the participant to express their knowledge, opinions, and feelings
- lead to “change talk”
- allow the participant to explore their options and generate their solutions.

EXAMPLES OF OPEN QUESTIONS



- What steps, if any, have you taken to figure out what you want to do?
- Are you more interested in finding a job that is like your past job, or are you more interested in switching careers? Why?
- What steps, if any, have you taken to try to figure out what you want to do?
- What jobs have you considered doing, and what have you eliminated as options?
- What steps are you ready to take to begin to make the move from seasonal to year-round work?

CLOSED QUESTIONS

EXPLAINED

- May be responded to with a brief word or concise factual response.
- Typically serve to gather information rather than foster relationships.
- Often result in the conversation being curtailed.
- Guide the discussion in a direction determined by the questioner.
- Usually do not elicit “change talk.”

EXAMPLES OF CLOSED QUESTIONS

- Did you graduate from school?
- Have you applied for any type of training or schooling?
- Are you interested in looking for a job?
- How many children do you have?
- Have you been in a workforce program before?
- Do you have any criminal convictions on your record?
- Have you thought about getting your GED?

TURNING CLOSED QUESTIONS TO OPEN QUESTIONS

1. Are you financially prepared to support yourself/family throughout the entire training period?
2. Are there any obstacles you need to address before you can begin working or attending school?
3. Would you be interested in registering for one of our job search workshops?
4. Do you plan to secure a job immediately after completing school?
5. Since your layoff, how many jobs have you applied for, and where have you submitted applications?

- What have you found…
- Why/How…
- When you think about…
- Can you tell me/describe…
- Can you say more about…
- What do you mean by…
- I'd be interested in knowing…
- I am not certain I understand…
- Can you give me an example?
- What would you like to know about…
- Can you tell me more about…

1. How would you support yourself/family if you went to training?
2. When you think about going to school or returning to work, what other things in your life—legal, medical, housing, etc.—would need to be planned around?
3. How might refreshing your job search skills help you find a job faster and more efficiently?
4. What do you plan to do immediately after you graduate?
5. I am interested in knowing about your job search since your layoff. What's been your strategy?

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AFFIRMATIONS

are statements made by the practitioner in response to what the participant has said or demonstrated.

You use affirmations to recognize people’s strengths, successes and efforts to change and increase people’s confidence in their ability to change.

AFFIRMATIONS

EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN THE PARTICIPANT'S ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

- That sounds like you have a good plan.
- It sounds like you have really thought a lot about this and have some good ideas about how you might...
- You are determined to do what is best for you and your children.
- That's a good suggestion that you have.
- Your willingness to share with me shows your determination.
- You are very resourceful.
- You handled yourself well in that situation.
- You have such a positive attitude even when you encounter a hiccup.
- You are very courageous to be so open about this.
- You have accomplished a lot in a short time.
- You've had a setback, but you are really trying. Look at the progress you are making.



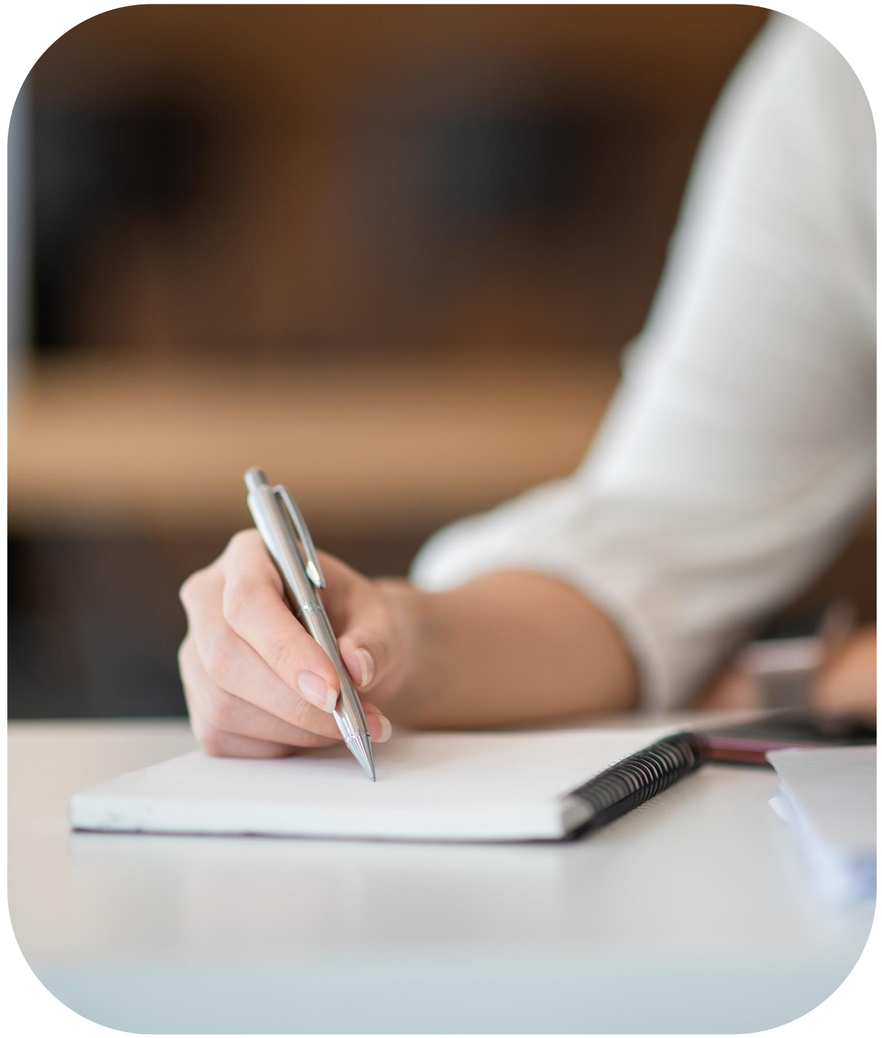
A SUBTLE BUT IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE:

Definition of Praise

- to express a favorable *judgment*
- the act of expressing approval or admiration
- Praise is defined as giving someone approval
- Praise is an external expression of approval given to someone as a result of their actions or achievements

Definition of Affirmation

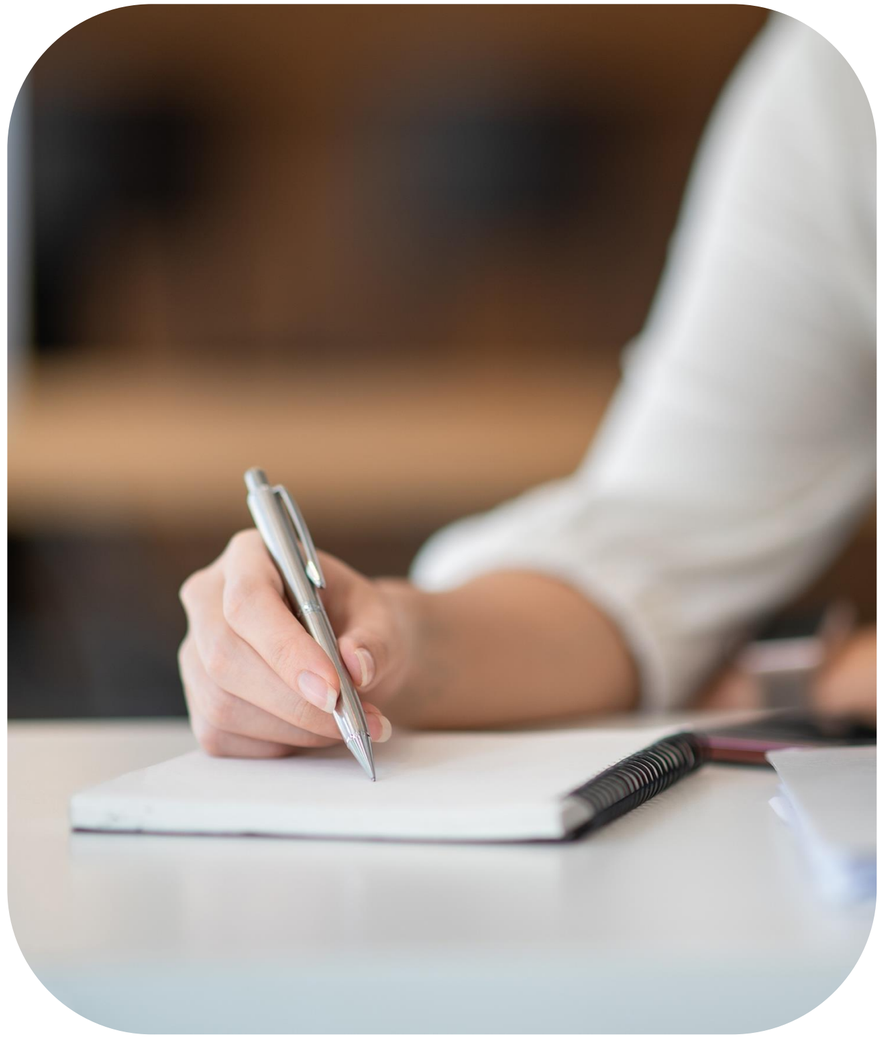
- State an effort the client is making or a strength you notice and reflect it to him.
- Affirmations are statements and gestures that recognize client strengths and acknowledge behaviors that lead toward positive change, no matter how big or small.
- Affirmations are an internal recognition of a person’s worth, regardless of their actions or achievements.



UNDERSTANDING CHECK

Which are examples of **affirmations?**

A. I think that was a creative solution.
B. The time and energy that you put into updating your resume shows.
C. You always join in discussions. You show courage when you participate.
D. I liked the way that you handled that situation.
E. I was happy that you spoke up today in class.
F. The time and energy that you put into updating your resume shows.



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RESPOND TO CHANGE TALK WITH AFFIRMATIONS

I want to get my diploma.	You know the diploma is important.
I think I can learn English.	You are willing to try and believe you can do it.
If I work on getting a certificate, I will feel better about myself.	You have thought a lot about this and see the value.
If I help my daughter now, she will do better at school as she grows.	You are doing what you can for your daughter. You know what is important for her.”
I want to go to the workshop. I have a lot to learn.”	You are approaching this with such a positive attitude.

AFFIRMATIONS RATIONALE



- Affirmations are the act of reflecting back positive feedback.
- Affirmations are based on strengths, behaviors, values, and effort.
- Use affirmations to build a person’s self-esteem and confidence.
- They give people space to see their own strengths and shift away from what is going wrong.
- Affirmations are a micro skill that increases change talk and decreases sustain talk.

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ASKING PERMISSION

From time to time, you may want to give a participant advice, provide information or talk about a specific topic. A coach would want to ask for permission before providing this information.



ASK, OFFER, ASK

- Only provide information or advice or express a concern if the participant asks you to do so or if you ask permission.
- Be brief, relevant, and focused.
- At first sign of resistance, full stop.
- Engage the participant in evaluating the information you provided.



CM: “I have an idea if you are open to hearing it.”

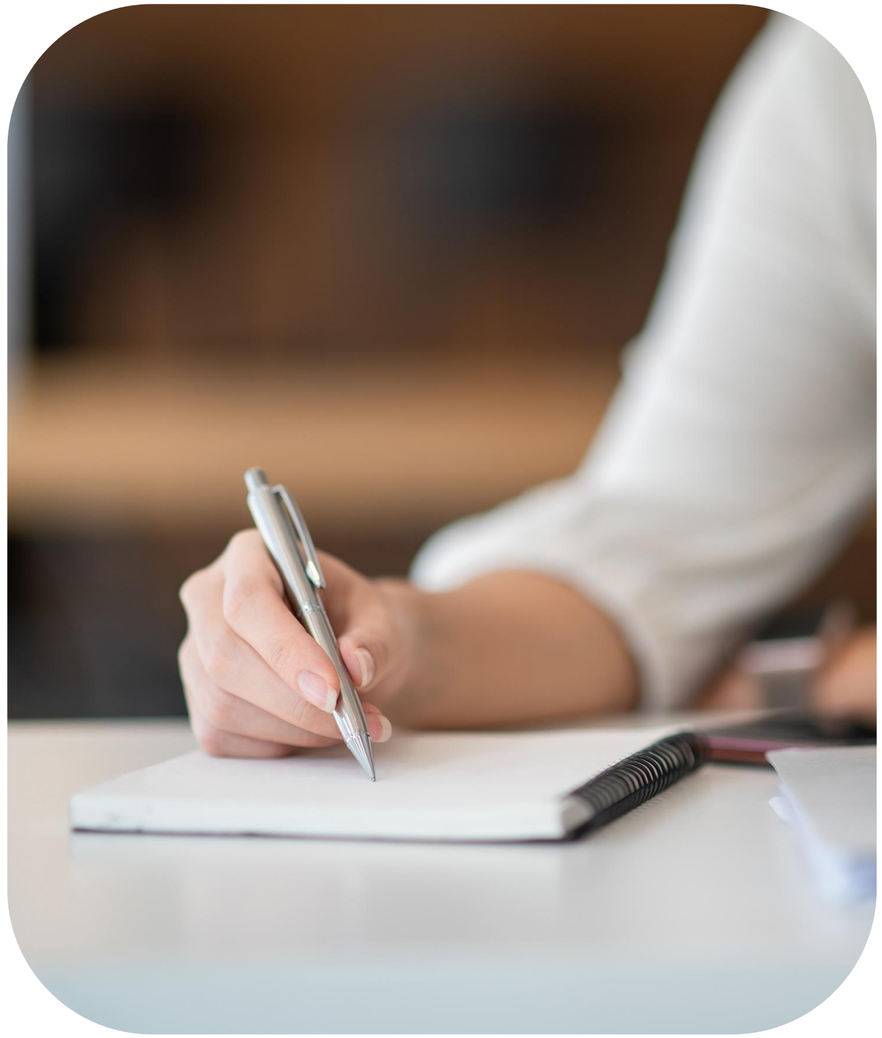
P: “Go ahead.”

CM: (Share your information)…“What are your thoughts on this?”

ASK PERMISSION BEFORE GIVING ADVICE, PROVIDING INFORMATION, OR EXPRESSING A CONCERN

- Would it be all right if…
- I would like to share a concern with you if you are open to that.
- I would appreciate a couple of minutes to provide you with some information that may be helpful to you.
- If you are okay with it, I would like to share some of the resources that have helped other participants I have worked with who have been in similar situations.
- I am really worried about something, and I was hoping you would let me explain it to you.
- I need to spend a few minutes today on…Would that be all right with you?
- I have an idea, if you are open to hearing it.

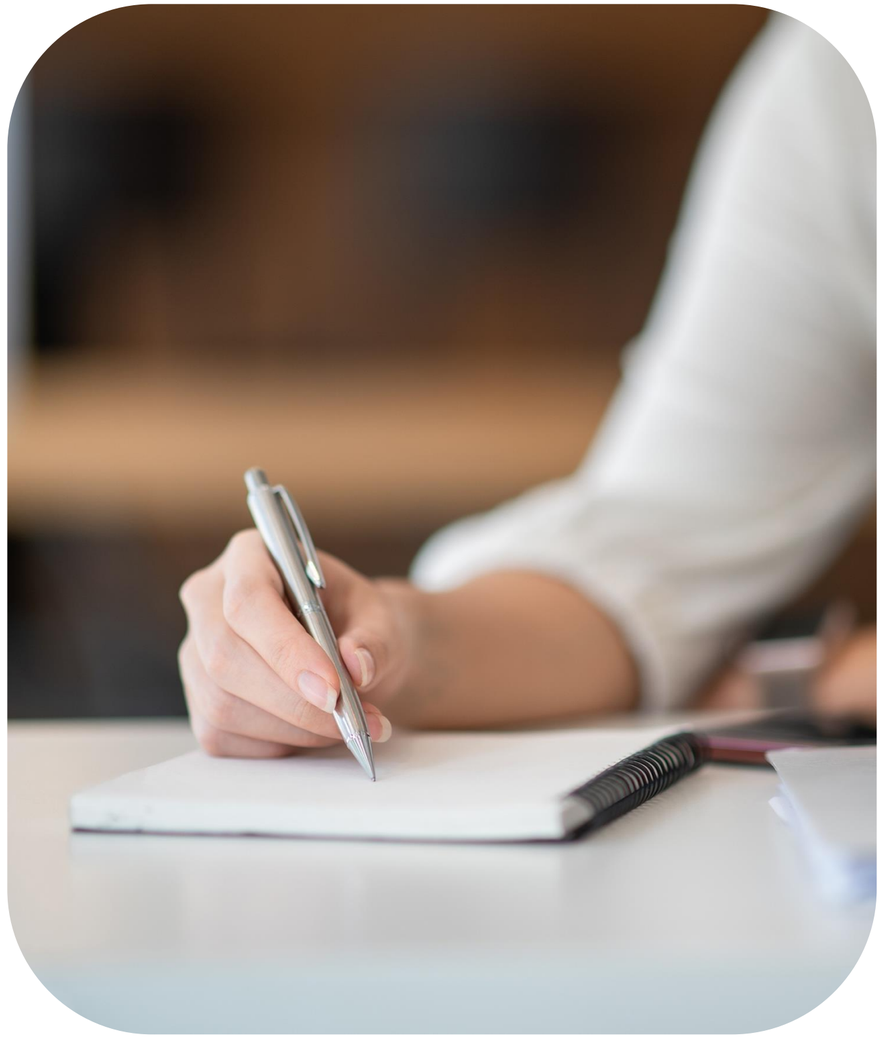




UNDERSTANDING CHECK

Which are examples of **ask permission?**

A. Would it be okay if we talked about how you feel about going to technical training?
B. I don’t think that is going to work and here is why.
C. I want to give you the results of your TABE test, if that's alright with you.
D. I have information on how to create a simple budget and a schedule for our financial literacy classes. Here is a calendar and some worksheets to get you thinking.
E. I could refer you to our business services representative if you think that would be a help to you.



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PERMISSION RATIONALE



- It is a respectful way to share information with another person.
- It allows the receiver to stay in control and be empowered.
- It builds trust and rapport.
- It emphasizes personal choice.
- If a participant agrees to hear your advice or information, then he/she is less likely to be resistant to the information.

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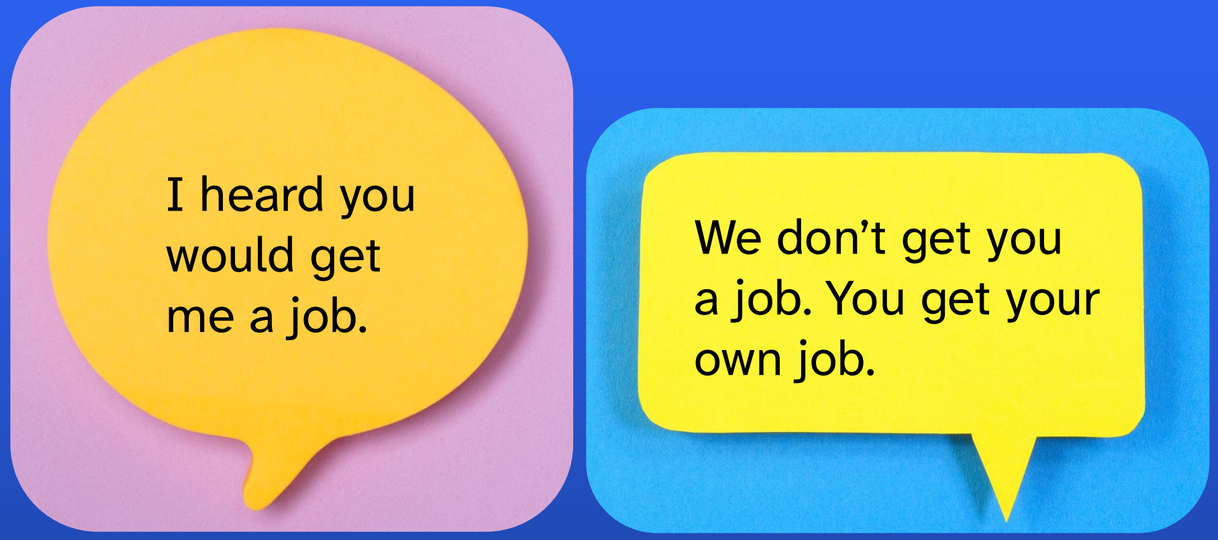




REFLECTIVE LISTENING

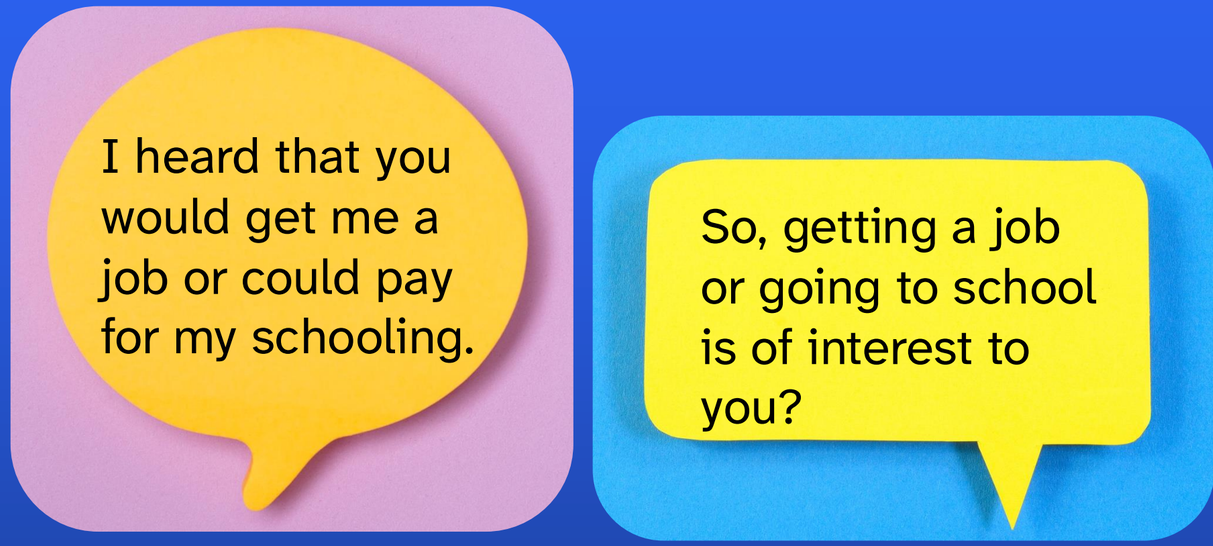
is a way of listening and responding. It’s a way of paying attention that requires certain behaviors of the listener like paraphrasing, repeating, checking for understanding.

LISTENING VS HEARING



Reacting without listening could make the participant feel:

- Embarrassed
- Uneasy
- Uncomfortable
- Awkward
- Misled



With reflective listening:

- We can understand what others think, feel, and want to convey
- Give the speaker a chance to correct something that they didn't mean to say
- Strengthen the bonds between people as it shows respect and a willingness to try to understand

REFLECTING LISTENING SENTENCE STARTERS

It sounds like you...

So, you feel...

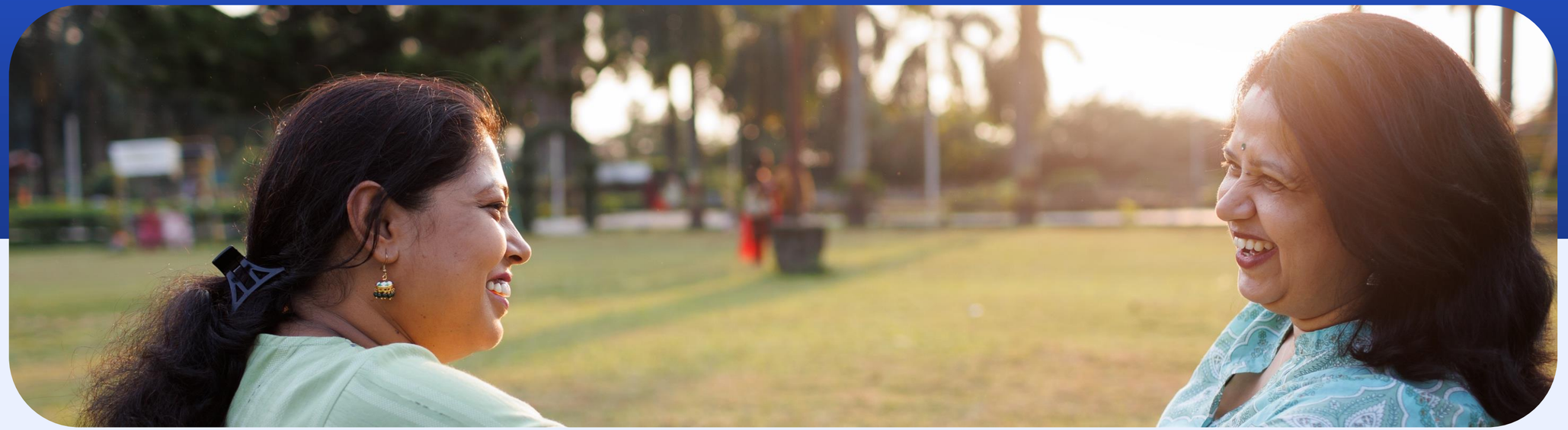
So, what I'm hearing you saying is...

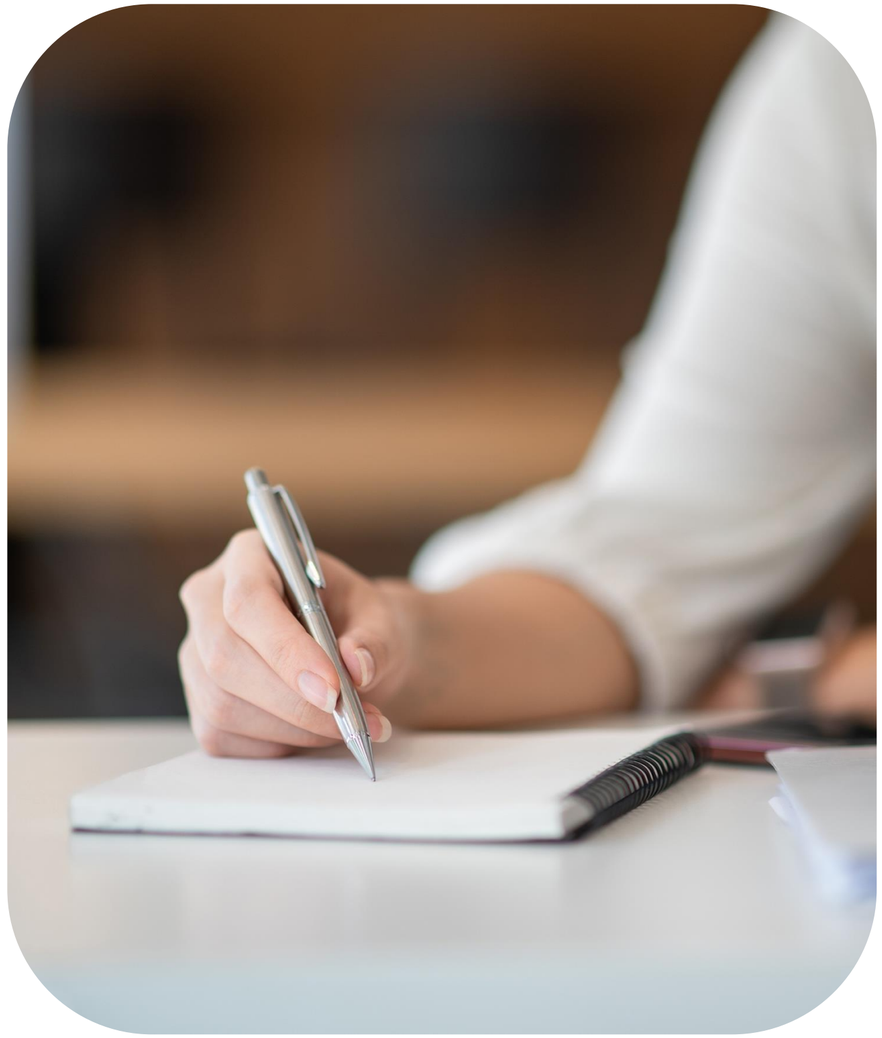
Let me make sure that I understand....

You are wondering if...

This is what I am hearing. Please correct me if I am wrong....

From your point of view...



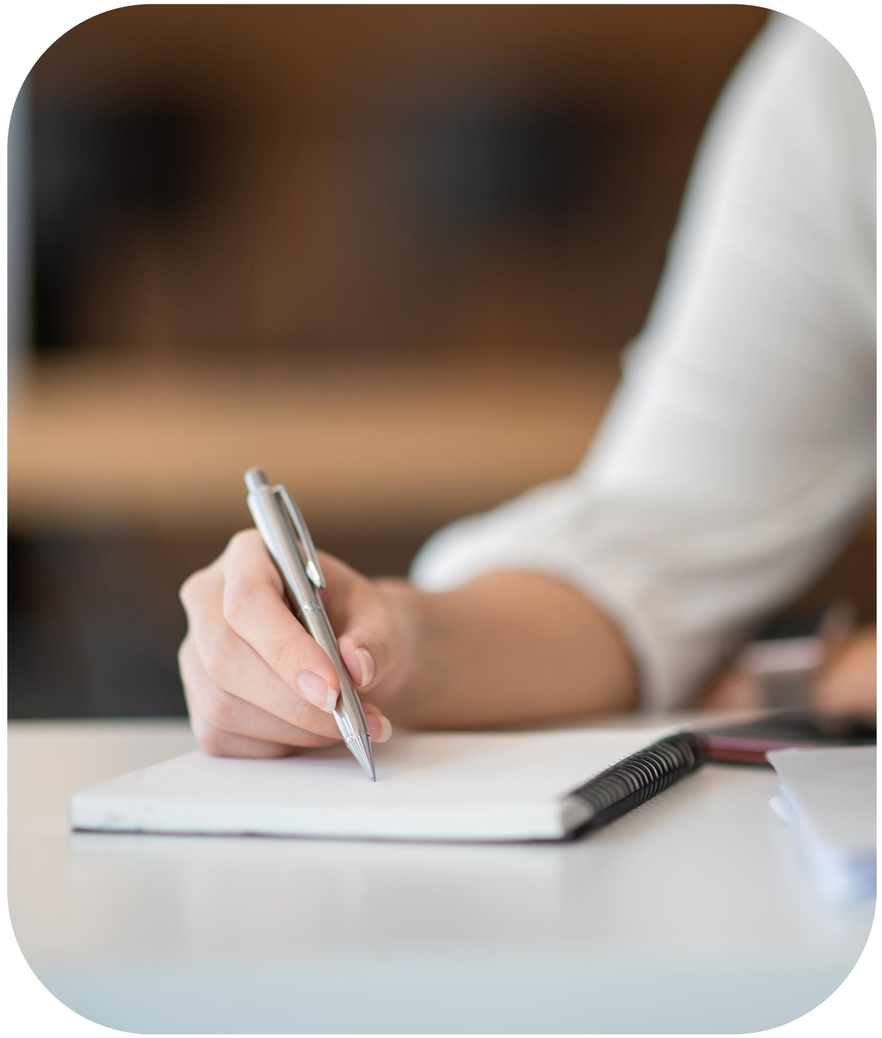


UNDERSTANDING CHECK

Client: “I’m uncertain about anyone other than myself or my family watching my children.”

Coach’s response:

A. “Have you never allowed anyone else to care for your children at all?”
B. “By doing so, you might be preventing your children from experiencing the advantages of interacting with their peers.”
C. “Research indicates that children who attend Head Start programs tend to be better adjusted when they enter school. It’s worth considering.”
D. “I enrolled my children in daycare, and they adapted well.”
E. “It seems that the idea of entrusting your children to someone unfamiliar makes you uneasy.”

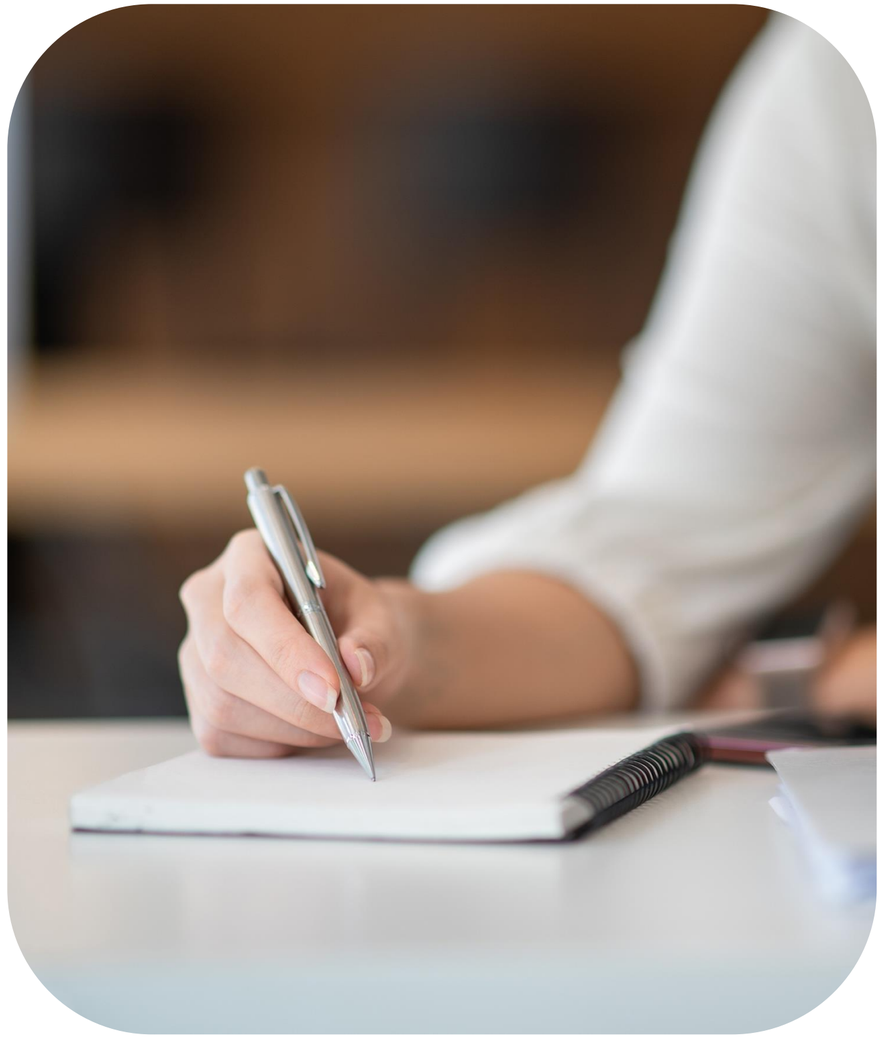


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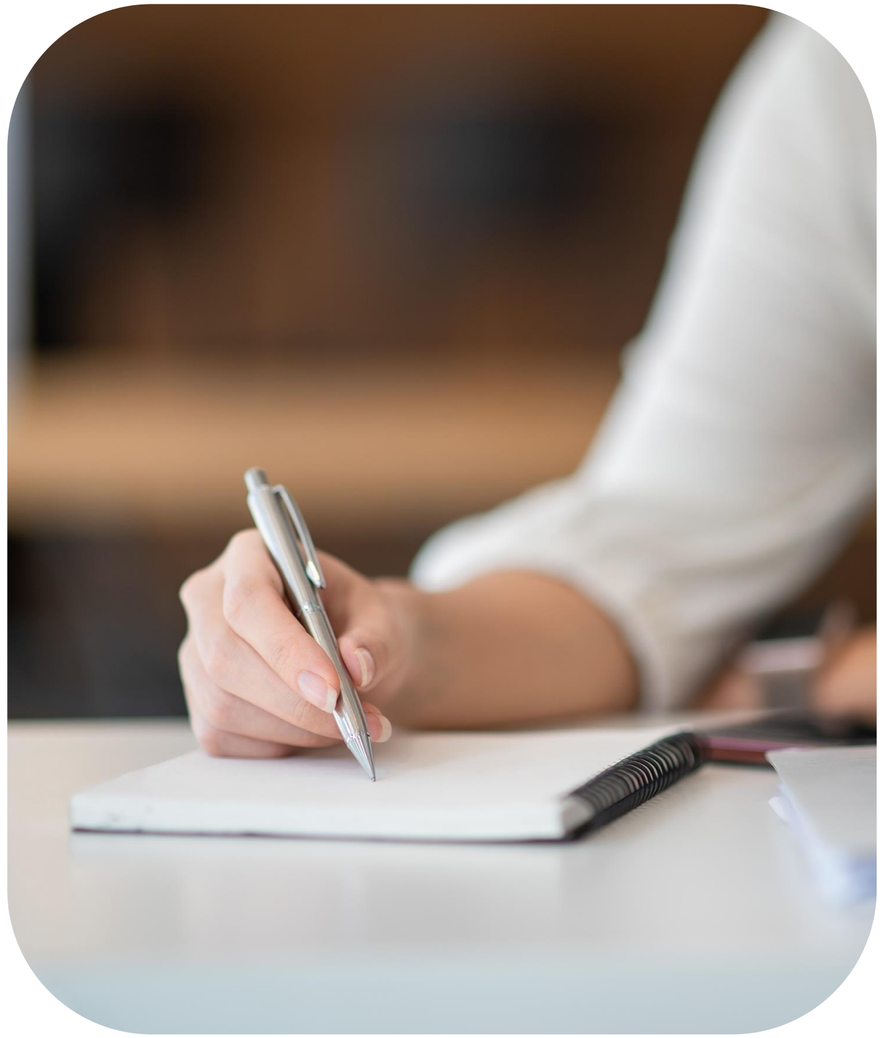


UNDERSTANDING CHECK

Client: "I haven’t worked at a real job before. I doubt anyone would hire me.“

Coach’s response:

A. “What kind of job are you interested in?”
B. “You are thinking that an employer would not hire someone who doesn’t have any work experience. And that makes you nervous to try?”
C. “We have a job developer who can give you job leads. You should talk to him.”
D. “At your age not working at a real job will be a red flag to an employer. It will make it tougher to find something.”



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SUMMARY STATEMENTS

Are a form of reflective listening that you can use to:

- highlight important aspects of the discussion
- shift the direction of the conversation when the conversation has become “stuck”
- early and throughout session
- at the end to review to pull together the session

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

Announce that you are about to summarize

- “Let me stop and summarize what we’ve talked about.”
- “This might be a good time to see where we are.”
- “We are nearing the end of our appointment, and I want to make sure I have captured everything you said.”

Include both sides of ambivalence about change

- “You are not sure you want to be here today, and you came because your mother insisted on it.”

Summarize any change talk that you heard

- “You think that you need to do something, but you aren’t sure what road you want to take. You know you would like to get a place of your own so you can be more independent of your mother. You aren’t sure where to start but you know you want a job.”

Invite participants to correct anything missed

- “What did I miss?”
- “Did I miss anything?”



SUMMARY STATEMENT STARTERS



- Let’s make a checklist of where we are…
- Let’s review what you have talked about…
- The important points that you made are…
- This might be a good time to review what we have discussed…
- So what I am hearing is that the following things are important to you…
- Our time is running out, and I would like to pull together what you have said so far. Let me know if I missed anything important that we covered…

“WHEN PEOPLE TALK LISTEN COMPLETELY…MOST PEOPLE NEVER LISTEN.” — ERNEST HEMINGWAY

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU

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