

USING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING TO INCREASE COVID-19 VACCINATIONS: VIGNETTES



A staff working in a long-term care facility discusses the COVID-19 vaccine with a resident who feels the vaccines were created too fast and she would rather take vitamins to protect her against COVID.

Staff: Hi Ms. Dixon... How are you doing today? **(OARS: Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Dixon: Barely managing with this pandemic!

Staff: You seem to be handling it well; You are wearing your mask and following the social distancing recommendations. Good job! **(OARS: Affirmations)**

Mrs. Dixon: Yes but it seems to be one thing after the other. I miss seeing my family on a regular basis.

Staff: Yes, it has been challenging for all of us, but there seems to be optimism and hope to get our lives back now that the COVID vaccines are available. Have you been vaccinated yet?

Mrs. Dixon: No! Not me! I'm not going to get vaccinated. It's not safe. These vaccines were made so quickly! I'm good with my natural supplements. I've always used vitamin C when I had a cold to help me recover. My vitamins will help me fight COVID too. I also read this on the Internet.

Staff: I can definitely understand your concerns, there is a lot of conflicting information out there. Can I tell you some of the things I've learned about the vaccine? **(OARS: Affirmations, Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Dixon: Sure. **(Permission to Provide Information, Rolling with Resistance)**

Staff: Scientists have been working for many years to develop vaccines against viruses like the one that causes COVID-19. The research has been going on since the early 1990's, which actually helped to speed up the development of the vaccine. All steps were taken to make sure the vaccines are safe and effective. Were you aware of that?

Mrs. Dixon: No, they didn't mention that on the Internet.

Staff: The Internet may not be the best source for trusted information in this case. You also mentioned taking vitamins. The World Health Organization states that only the vaccine will be able to protect us from getting seriously ill with COVID-19. What do you think? **(OARS: Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Dixon: Well, on one hand I feel I should get vaccinated since my vitamins won't protect me, but on the other hand, I'm worried if it is safe for me to get? **(Change Talk)**

Staff: It sounds like you don't know what to do. What would be the worst case scenario if you get vaccinated? **(OARS: Reflections, Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Dixon: I might get sick and never fully recover.

Staff: So, on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being not important at all and 10 being extremely important, how important is it to you to get the COVID vaccination? **(OARS: Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Dixon: I guess an 8. Being able to socialize, having a meal with friends, and having my whole family visit at the same time would be nice.

Staff: It seems rather important to you for things to get back to normal. And sounds like the vaccine may help with this. I can go ahead and get you scheduled to take the vaccination if that is okay with you?

(OARS: Reflections, Summarizing; Supporting Self-efficacy, Developing Discrepancy)

Mrs. Dixon: Yes, please go ahead and schedule my appointment.

Staff: I am happy to do that.

Mrs. Dixon: Thank you for helping clear up some of my concerns about the vaccine.

Staff: Thank you for sharing your concerns and for allowing me to discuss with you what I know.

A resident at a long-term care facility is upset because her son will not give permission for her to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

Staff: Hello Mrs. Robinson. How are you doing today? **(OARS: Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Robinson: Not too well. I just got off the phone with my son and he still won't budge on signing off for me to get the COVID-19 Vaccine. I really think it would help to reduce my risk of getting COVID, but he just won't listen to what I have to say!

Staff: Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that Mrs. Robinson. Sounds like your son not signing off for you to get the vaccine is stressful for you. May I ask you what some of his concerns are? **(OARS: Open-ended Questioning, Affirmations)**

Mrs. Robinson: I wish I could tell you! He just says he doesn't trust this vaccine and is not willing to sign off on me getting it.

Staff: I see. Sounds like he isn't clearly communicating to you what his specific concerns are regarding the vaccine. What do you think would happen if you told him how frustrated you are about the situation? **(OARS: Reflections, Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Robinson: I don't know, maybe he would listen to what I had to say if he knew the emotional toll everything is taking on me. I know he loves me and wants the best for me, but I just get so angry when he dismisses me and what I have to say! He doesn't realize how many friends I've lost due to COVID. It's scary!

Staff: Mrs. Robinson I understand that this is a very difficult position for you to be in, so being angry and frustrated is completely normal. It sounds like your son has some concerns about what would happen if you were given the vaccine, but is unaware of what you are currently going through not being able to advocate for yourself to get the vaccine. Would that be accurate? **(OARS: Affirmations, Open-ended Questioning; Developing Discrepancy)**

Mrs. Robinson: Wow! I never thought of it like that.

Staff: How do you think your son would respond to hearing the emotional toll that this is having on you? **(OARS: Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Robinson: I think he would listen to what I had to say if he knew how stressed out I was about the situation. Like I said, I know he loves and wants the best for me, but he has been so focused on his point of view that I really don't think he has taken my feelings into consideration. I think I am going to tell him about my feelings when I talk to him tomorrow. **(Change Talk)**

Staff: That sounds like a great idea. Would it be okay for me to provide you with some information from trusted resources like the Centers for Disease Control or the National COVID Resiliency Network for you and your son to review during your talk? I also would love to follow-up with you after your talk with your son to see how things went. Could we maybe talk around this time tomorrow? **(OARS: Summarizing)**

Mrs. Robinson: Sure, I would like that and yes this time next tomorrow will be perfect!

A staff member at a long-term care facility calls a family member for approval to administer the COVID-19 vaccine booster to a resident.

Staff: Hello Mrs. Thomas. I'm calling from Loving Care. How are you doing today? **(OARS: Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Thomas: I'm doing fine. Is my mother okay?

Staff: Yes, your mother is great. I am calling to let you know that we are scheduling COVID-19 boosters and have your mother, Mrs. Smith scheduled to get her boost on Thursday.

Mrs. Thomas: Oh absolutely not! If the first vaccine was so good, why do we need a booster? This just proves that the vaccines don't work!

Staff: Sounds like you have some concerns about the booster. I realize that everything is happening so fast and things can seem overwhelming, so having questions or concerns is normal. Could you tell me a little more about your concerns? **(OARS: Reflections, Affirmations, Open-ended Questioning)**

Mrs. Thomas: Yeah, well like I said if the first vaccine was so good, why do we need a booster?

Staff: Again Mrs. Thomas your questions are normal and some of the same questions that others have as well. Can I share some information about the boosters? **(OARS: Affirmations)**

Mrs. Thomas: Sure, why not?

Staff: The COVID -19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. However public health experts are seeing reduced protection over time. So boosters are recommended for everyone ages 18 and older. This booster would be an added protection for your mother.

Mrs. Thomas: Well, I appreciate the information, but I still think I will wait on my mother getting the booster vaccine for now.

Staff: Of course, this is your decision. It sounds like you still have some hesitancy about the safety. Please be assured that your mother's safety is important to all of us. Would it be okay for me to email or mail you some information from trusted resources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the National COVID-19 Resiliency Network about the purposes and benefits of the boosters? **(OARS: Reflections and Summarizing)**

Mrs. Thomas: Sure.

Staff: And if it's okay with you, after you review the information, I would like to follow up to answer any questions you might have. Does this time next week work for a follow-up?

Mrs. Thomas: This time next week is good and you can email the information to me.

Staff: I will get that information to you today. Thank you for your time.