

Motivational Interview Training Script Exercise

Script 1: Expert Trap (This is not MI)

CHAP: You know, Dena, it's really important to have your COVID-19 vaccine. If not, you're putting yourself and the community in danger. *[Confrontational, making client defensive.]* Do you know there are still lots of cases of COVID-19 around in our community and the illness can be very dangerous? Even if symptoms are milder for young people like yourself, it could cause long-term health problems if you catch it. And what about your ahna? She's getting older and not as healthy as you. What if you catch COVID-19 and give it to her? *[guilting, shaming]* You should get your vaccine. We could do it now if you want. *[expert stance no eliciting.]*

Patient: I don't see the rush. And the unknown effects of this new vaccine might be worse than COVID! I heard it makes some people sterile. I want kids in the next few years!

CHAP: Studies have demonstrated no significant adverse effects. I promise, the vaccine is safe. *[Dismissive no reflection or explanation of the patient's concern about infertility.]* You shouldn't believe everything you read on the Internet.

Patient: I've heard something else and not only on the Internet, I've heard that the vaccination is not mandatory.

CHAP: Yes, you're right, it's not mandatory, but you're putting yourself and others in danger by choosing not to get vaccinated.

Patient: But what if I have a bad reaction? I want to rely on my natural immune system, instead of putting unknown chemicals in my body. I'm worried there are risks with this new vaccine that we don't fully understand, and you don't seem to be interested in my concerns for my health.

CHAP: Of course, I am! Come on, Dena, I've known you since you were a kid. And right now I'm worried about the fact that you could get COVID-19 when it could be prevented by this vaccine. *[Fails to address the patient's concerns about vaccine chemicals and other risks.]*

Patient: I think we do not understand each other. Let's talk about this another time.

Script 2: This is MI

CHAP: Dena, what are your thoughts about getting a COVID-19 vaccine? *[Open-ended question.]*

Patient: Well, I know that it will protect against the virus and help us get back to normal. My dad and my grandmother received theirs, but I'm worried that it was rushed out too quickly and I can't be sure that it's safe. I'm really concerned about the vaccine causing infertility. Other vaccines are more tried and tested, but this one still makes me nervous.

CHAP : Right, like you said, the COVID-19 vaccine is to protect against the virus and to help us all get back to normal. If I understood you correctly, other vaccines seem safe to you, and you're a bit hesitant about this one because it's new and was developed quickly and you've heard about some side-effects that make you nervous. *[Reflection, acknowledging concerns.]*

Patient: Yes, I know it's good to protect against COVID, and I do want to get back to normal, but I don't know. I've read a lot of articles and online comments. Lots of people are worried about the vaccine being rushed out, and people are talking about it causing infertility. We just don't know the long-term effects and whether it's safe.

CHAP: So, you feel that it's important to protect yourself as long as you know that the vaccines are safe. At the same time you're worried about what you've read about possible unknown effects of the COVID-19 vaccine, especially for families who want to have children. *Reflection/Summary of patient's position.]* I'm glad to hear that you've done a lot of research and are thinking about the subject. *[Affirmation]* I have an information sheet here about studies on the safety of the vaccine. Shall we go through that briefly? *[Elicit Permission to give information.]*

Patient: Sure! I want to know exactly what I'm risking.

CHAP: Yes, Dena, I've always respected you for being a person who weighs medical decisions carefully. *[Affirmation]* As far as safety goes, in one trial, more than 40,000 people *[Specific statistics are more credible.]* got the vaccine as a test. They were monitored and followed-up on for several months. Although many recipients reported mild reactions like pain at the injection site, tiredness, and headache, only 4 people had more serious side effects. You might expect to have a sore arm and feel a bit sick for a day like a mild cold. *[Acknowledge side-effects but emphasize their mild nature.]*

You also said you're worried about infertility. There have been lots of rumors but no scientific evidence to support the claim of women or men developing infertility from the COVID-19 vaccine. Can I share my understanding of how this misunderstanding occurred? *[Elicit Permission to share information]*

Patient: Yes, of course.

CHAP: Well, I looked into this topic myself, and my understanding is that confusion arose when a false report surfaced on social media. That false report said that the spike protein on this coronavirus was the same as another spike protein called syncytin-1. Syncytin-1 is involved in the growth and attachment of the placenta during pregnancy. The false report said that getting the COVID-19 vaccine would cause a woman's body to fight this different spike protein and affect her fertility. However, the two spike proteins are completely different. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine will not affect the fertility of women who want to get pregnant, including through in vitro fertilization. During the Pfizer vaccine tests, 23 women volunteers involved in the study became pregnant, and the only one who suffered a pregnancy loss had not received the actual vaccine, but a placebo. *[Provide Information including specific statistics from scientific studies]* What do you think about what I've shared about general safety and infertility? *[Elicit Response]*

Patient: Well, it does help to know more about the safety checks, and you're sure about the infertility report being false?

CHAP: I am sure, and you're right to want to keep yourself safe. **[Affirmation]**

Patient: Thank you for taking the time to listen and understand my concerns. I think it's a bit clearer now.

CHAP: Good! I'd like to see you get the vaccine, but the decision is yours to make. Nobody else can make that decision for you. **[Autonomy Supportive Statement]**

Script Summary: Did you notice how reflective listening allowed the patient, in a non-judgmental way, to express concerns and hesitancy? Using the Elicit-Provide-Elicit method allowed the CHAP to give solicited information that could be accepted by the patient. Ending with a statement of the patient's autonomy in making the decision demonstrated partnership and respect.

It should also be noted that CHAPS themselves may feel ambivalent about vaccines; this hesitancy is best acknowledged and addressed so that you are clear about your own stance and biases in communicating about COVID-19 vaccines with your patients and other community members.

Scripts adapted to Alaska Native CHAPS COVID-19 vaccine conversation from Lewandowsky, S., Cook, J., Schmid, P., Holford, D. L., Finn, A., Leask, J., Thomson, A., Lombardi, D., Al-Rawi, A. K., Amazeen, M. A., Anderson, E. C., Armaos, K. D., Betsch, C., Bruns, H. H. B., Ecker, U. K. H., Gavaruzzi, T., Hahn, U., Herzog, S., Juanchich, M., Kendeou, P., Newman, E. J., Pennycook, G., Rapp, D. N., Sah, S., Sinatra, G. M., Tapper, K., Vraga, E. K (2021). The COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Handbook. A practical guide for improving vaccine communication and fighting misinformation.

Thomas SJ, Moreira ED Jr, Kitchin N, Absalon J, Gurtman A, Lockhart S, Perez JL, Pérez Marc G, Polack FP, Zerbini C, Bailey R, Swanson KA, Xu X, Roychoudhury S, Koury K, Bouguermouh S, Kalina WV, Cooper D, Frenck RW Jr, Hammitt LL, Türeci Ö, Nell H, Schaefer A, Ünal S, Yang Q, Liberator P, Tresnan DB, Mather S, Dormitzer PR, Şahin U, Gruber WC, Jansen KU; C4591001 Clinical Trial Group. Safety and Efficacy of the BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine through 6 Months. N Engl J Med. 2021 Nov 4;385(19):1761-1773. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa2110345. Epub 2021 Sep 15. PMID: 34525277; PMCID: PMC8461570.