

Double-Sided Reflections

Both sides of the story, ending on change

Skill
Reflections

Helps with
Ambivalence

Key word
“and”

A double-sided reflection holds both the person’s sustain talk and their change talk, usually joined with “and” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

● Helpful tips

Sustain talk first, change talk second.
People tend to respond to the last thing said.
Keep your tone genuine and free of judgment.
Use “and” or “yet,” not “but.”
Mix up your stems and phrasing.
Aim to understand, not to judge.

● Some uses

Responding with empathy while leaning toward change
Acknowledging sustain talk and focusing on change talk
Dancing with discord
Turning toward strengths, goals or change talk
Highlighting ambivalence
Making sense of complex feelings together

Sample stems

- On one hand [sustain talk], and on the other hand [change talk].
- It seems like [sustain talk], and you know that [change talk].
- You really enjoy [sustain talk], and you’re noticing it’s becoming a problem because [change talk].
- Sometimes you think you could never [sustain talk], yet you’ve had some successes [change talk].

Examples

Client I’m not sure I want to be here right now.

Reflection You’re feeling uncomfortable here, and you showed up anyway.

Client I want to change. It’s just really hard, and every time I try I fail. What’s the point?

Reflection You’ve been discouraged a lot, and somehow you keep that hope alive. This change really matters to you.

Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: Helping people change* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.