

Strategies for Dealing with Resistance



Performance Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Provide a loose definition of resistance
- Demonstrate ability to listen reflectively
- Demonstrate ability to use simple reflection techniques
- Articulate differences in levels of reflection
- List the strategic responses to resistance

What is Resistance?

- Similar to “sustain talk”
 - *Any client speech that supports the Status Quo.*
- *Resistance is something that happens within the context of a relationship or system.*
 - *In human psychology, this is something that happens between people.*
 - *Examples: Interrupting, Disagreeing, Discounting, Changing the subject*

“Two Sides of a Coin”

Change Talk

- Disadvantages of Status Quo
- Advantages of Change
- Intention to Change
- Optimism about change

Resistance Talk

- Advantages of Status Quo
- Disadvantages to Change
- Intention not to Change
- Pessimism about Change

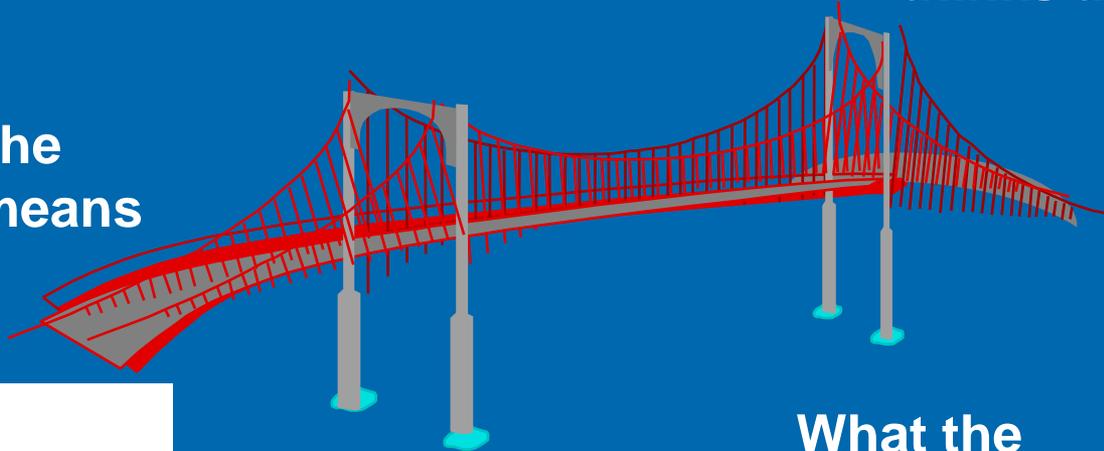
Communication Breakdown

What the speaker means

1



SPEAKER



2

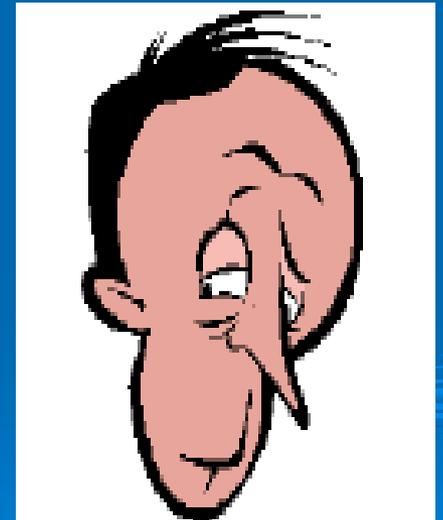
What the speaker says

What the listener hears

3

What the listener thinks the speaker means

4



LISTENER

Definition: Reflective Listening

- A hypothesis (guess) about speaker's meaning
- A statement to convey understanding
- Intonation down
- Short stems
 - “So...”
 - “Sounds like...”
 - “So you...”
 - “Your wondering if ...”
 - “Its like...”
 - “You feel...”

Question?

Reflection.

Reflective Listening

Learning Points

- Seemingly simple statements can have a variety of meanings
- “Obvious meanings” may not be obvious at all
- *Speaker* feels *compelled* to elaborate and *disclose more* about themselves!
- *Intention* to understand (interviewer) and be understood (speaker)...
 - *Necessary* but...
 - *Not sufficient*
- Skills needed



Handling Resistance

- Simple reflection
- Amplified reflection
- Double-sided reflection



Levels of Reflection

- **Simple Reflections:**

- Repetition / “Parroting”

- Simply repeats an element of what the speaker has said.

- Rephrase

- Listener stays *close* to what the speaker said, but substitutes synonyms or slightly rephrases what was offered.

Levels of Reflection

- **Complex Reflections:**

- Paraphrase

- A major restatement where the listener infers the *meaning* in what was said & reflects it back in new words.
- Like continuing a paragraph that the speaker has been developing – saying the *next sentence* rather than repeating the last one.

- Feeling, Metaphor

- A paraphrase that emphasizes the emotional dimension through feeling statements or metaphor

Reflection Face Off Exercise

- Form Two Lines Facing one another
 - Speaker makes a statement using one of the following:
 - “One thing I like about myself is that I...”
 - “One thing you should know about me is that...”
 - Listener offers a reflection
- 

Amplified

Reflection

Increasing the intensity of the resistant element



Double-Sided Reflections

On the one hand...



On the other hand...

Handling Resistance: Strategic Responses

- Shifting focus
- Coming Alongside
- Agreement with a twist
- Reframing
- Emphasizing personal choice/control
- Disclosing feelings

Shifting Focus



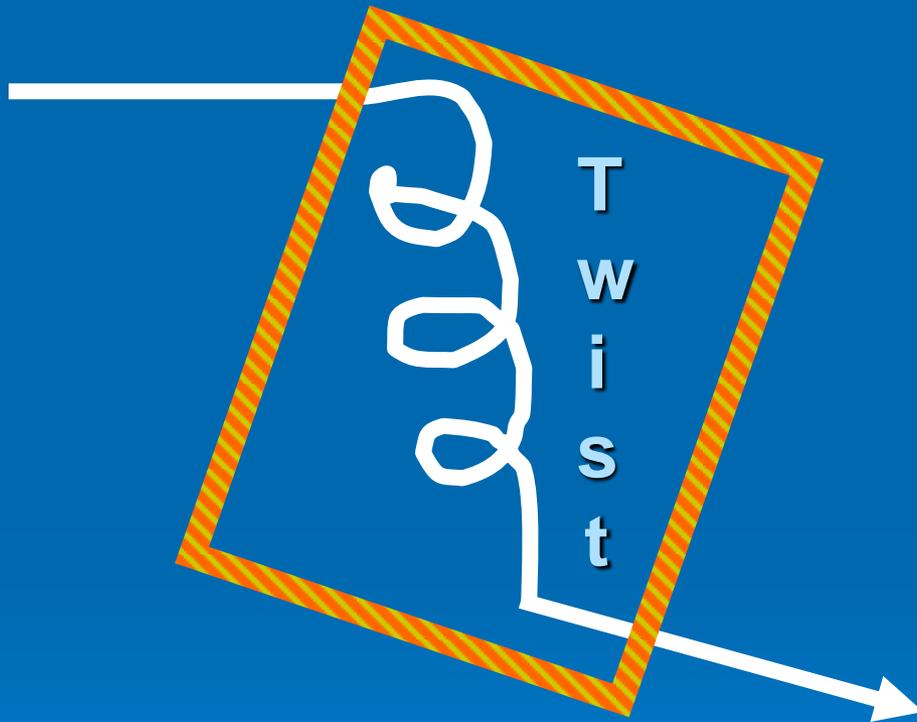
“We’ve talked about what other people say about your drinking; now let’s talk about what you think.”

Coming Alongside



“It sounds like the pros of using still far outweigh the cons. So it may be that you decide smoking is something that you don’t want to give up.”

Agreement with a



Reflection with a

REFRAME

Emphasizing Personal Choice / Control

- “It really is your choice about what you do in this situation.”
- “No one can make you do this. The decision is yours.”

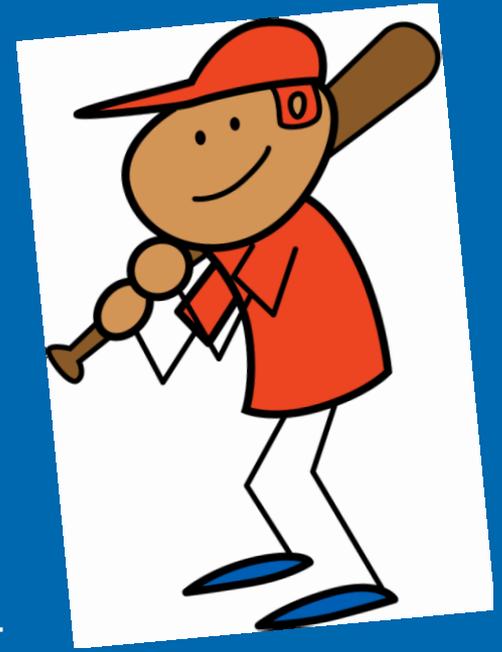
Disclosing Feelings

“I’m getting a stuck feeling as we sit here.
And I’m wondering whether you feel the
same?”



Batting Practice

- Roles:
 - Batter, Pinch-hitter, Pitchers
- Pitchers
 - “Pitch” a *resistant* statement that might be made by clients
- Batter
 - Attempt to get “some wood” on the ball (by making reflections)
 - May signal “pitch hitter” to “take that pitch”
 - Takes three “swings” before next “batter up”



Musical Chairs Exercise

- On a slip of paper, write down a **resistant statement** that you would normally hear during the course of your day.
- Place the slips in a “hat”
- Play Musical Chairs
- The participant left standing at the end of each round will pick a statement from the hat and respond to it by using a reflection technique of their choice.