

Motivation Direction

Motivational direction determines the type of consequences that are likely to move us to action, how we respond and the consideration we give to those responses.

It is an important aspect of how we motivate ourselves. Are people you coach motivated by what they want (fulfillment, meaning, pleasure) or by what you want to avoid (pain, suffering, fear)?

Not everyone is motivated in the same way or in the same blend of emotions and behaviours.

One person's suffering or pain can be another's meaning and pleasure and vice versa.

People who move toward what they want focus on the possibilities and visions of the future and are inspired to take actions that move them towards what has meaning for them.

People who move away from experiences, what they don't want, are motivated by the problems to solve. Threats of negative consequences and deadlines galvanise them into activity as opposed to paralysing them.

The most useful motivational orientation is balanced between away from with a growing bias as recovery progresses in the toward direction.

Being spurred into and taking powerful actions when confronted with fearful and anxious problems **and** being able to see possibilities, be connected to meaning and take powerful actions to bring them into their daily experience.

Being motivated by fear and what is not wanted is not sustainable for a recovery process over the long term.

Exploring a person's motivational direction

People will reveal their current motivational direction by how they respond to questions:

The person will tell you either what they want or what they don't want and so reveal how their motivation is focused.

Q: Tell me about your current treatment programme?

“I want it to work so I can get back to my job which I truly love and that is important to people”
(toward motivation)

“I want to get better as if I don’t I may lose my job and I don’t have enough money to survive and support my family” (away from motivation)

Recap

In early stages of recovery remember to:

1. Listen for the main motivational direction and emotional language that is associated with them
2. Remember that this is natural and necessary and do not try to stop it or influence a change in direction. Self manage yourself to not be provoked into trying to lessen their fear.
3. Listen for language and energy from your client that is about the toward direction. Those aspects of their lives that have meaning.
4. Expect them to be blended, i.e their will be fear of losing or hurting the aspects in their lives that has meaning to them (i.e family, partner, children etc)
5. Don’t push the meaning direction but plant seeds.
6. Remember short term problem solving may well be an appropriate focus especially when linked to core needs. Big picture meaning and life purpose can evoke the opposite response than that which you might expect.
7. It’s okay if your client finds relief in thinking about future Meaning but keep your feet on ground and the actual practicalities clear and present in the coaching relationship.