

## HANDOUT 15.1

# Suggested Open Questions for Measuring Skill in the Four Tasks

*Directions:* After a coaching session, use these questions in your learning community as a guide for offering and receiving feedback.

Suggested Open Questions for Measuring Skill in the Four Tasks	
<b>Engaging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I understand my client’s perspectives on the situation or dilemma?</li> <li>• Do I ask more open than closed questions?</li> <li>• Do I talk less than half of the time?</li> <li>• Do I change questions to reflections instead? (Drop the tone at the end.)</li> <li>• Do I acknowledge and affirm my client’s positive traits and efforts?</li> <li>• Do I acknowledge specific things my client has done as well as their enduring and commendable qualities?</li> <li>• Do I offer an equal number of reflections to questions? Do I offer twice as many reflections to questions?</li> <li>• Do I use OARS without necessarily using them in a goal-directed way?</li> <li>• Do I notice the client’s level of engagement in our conversation?</li> <li>• Do I use complex reflections more than simple reflections (rephrasing)?</li> <li>• Do I use reframing as a complex reflection to offer a different meaning?</li> <li>• Do I understand discord when I hear it, and do I know how to diffuse it?</li> <li>• Do I gather together and summarize what the client said?</li> </ul>
<b>Focusing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I help clients choose a clear agenda for the session?</li> <li>• Do I help maintain the direction toward the agenda after the focus is clear?</li> <li>• Do we have a working alliance toward agreed-upon goals?</li> <li>• Do I help clients connect goals to their larger horizons, dreams, and values?</li> <li>• Do I use a decisional balance to maintain neutrality if I feel it’s necessary?</li> </ul>
<b>Evoking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I know enough about this client’s motivations for change?</li> <li>• Do I recognize change talk (DARN CATS)? Do I intentionally respond to evoke and strengthen it?</li> <li>• Do I use directional questions to cultivate change talk and ask for examples and elaboration?</li> <li>• Do I recognize sustain talk and respond in a way to minimize rather than maximize it?</li> <li>• Do I use OARS skills in a directional way, and respond to change talk when it happens?</li> <li>• Do I know the client’s ideas, goals, or values that would be motivators for change?</li> </ul>

*(continued)*

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## Suggested Open Questions for Measuring Skill *(page 2 of 2)*

<b>Evoking</b> <i>(continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do I use affirmations, reflections, and summaries in a way to strengthen and ask for more change talk?</li><li>• Do I hear a shift to more change talk than sustain talk as a result of evoking?</li><li>• Do I use the ask–offer–ask method to provide information or advise?</li><li>• Do I plant seeds for change talk when there seems to be little of it?</li><li>• Do I gather change talk statements and offer them as a “bouquet” summary?</li></ul>
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do I check for client readiness to transition from evoking to planning?</li><li>• Do I wait on my client’s readiness and avoid planning prematurely?</li><li>• Do I defer to my client’s ideas for how to make a change?</li><li>• Do I evoke mobilizing (CATs) change talk rather than trying to suggest or inject my solutions?</li><li>• Do I empower my client to explore possible ways forward?</li><li>• Do I use MI skills to strengthen my client’s confidence if it seems to be low?</li><li>• Do I facilitate my client’s discovery of their strengths and past successes?</li></ul>