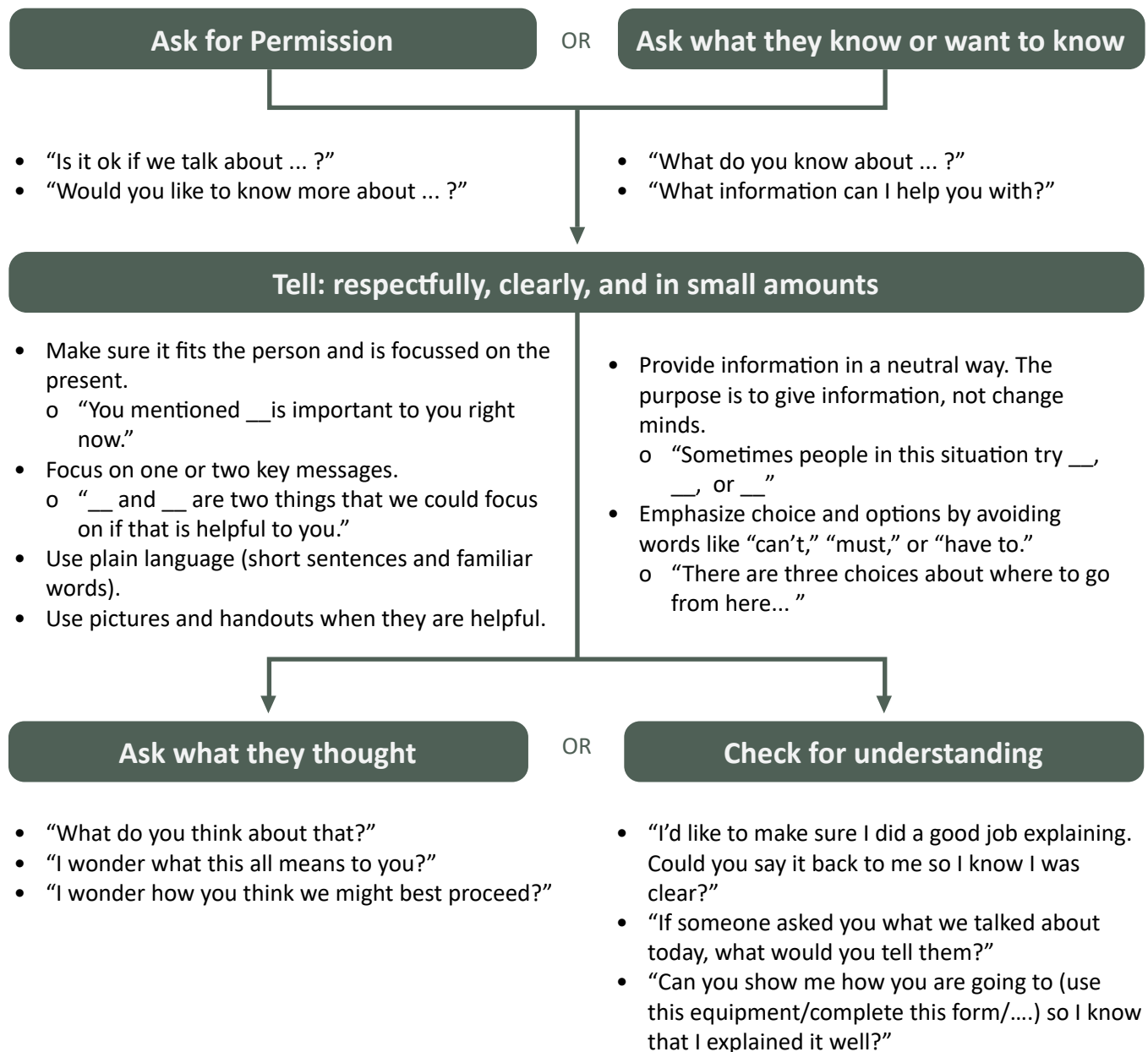


Ask-Tell-Ask

An Effective Way to Give Information and Advice

Version Date: 23 March 2022

Ask-Tell-Ask (also called Elicit-Provide-Elicit) uses the spirit of motivational interviewing to increase the chances that people will be ready, willing, and able to act on information or advice.



Special Cases

Rules and Professional or Legal Obligations

- **A rule:** “There are some important things to know about working together, and I want to make sure you understand what they are.”
- **A professional obligation:** “As your _____. I’m very concerned about . . . I’d like your thoughts on what I just told you.”
- **A topic you must discuss:** “There’s something I need to tell you. I noticed something in your assessment/ results/situation and I wonder what you will think about it.”
- **A reporting requirement:** “As you know, our conversations are confidential, but there is an important exception. The law requires me to report _____. I want our work together to be helpful, and I want to be sure you understand this responsibility I have.”

Someone Asks for Information or Advice

Be careful when giving advice, because you can fall into the **expert trap**. The expert trap is when you give people advice based solely on your ideas and it doesn’t fit for them.

Here are two things to remember when asked for advice:

1. **Emphasize choice.**
 - o “I can’t tell you what to do, but I can tell you what others have done.”
 - o “Something you could try if you want to is _____”
2. Instead of giving one piece of advice or a single idea, **offer a menu of choices**. This is a special kind of Ask-Tell-Ask, sometimes called a **behavioral menu**.
 - o **ASK:** “Would you like to hear some ideas others have used or that might fit for you?”
 - o **TELL:** Share two or three ideas all at once. Use the last idea to encourage one of their own. “Some things you could try are _____, or maybe you’ve had an idea while I was talking.”
 - o **ASK:** “Do any of these ideas work for you?”



Sharing Personal Experience

When we have had a similar experience we often become enthusiastic about a particular idea. In order to not fall into the expert trap, remember that every person’s situation is unique, and share your own experience briefly as a way to encourage the person to come up with an idea that might work for you them.

- **ASK:** “I experienced something similar in the past. Would you like to hear some things that I tried?”
- **TELL:** Briefly one or two options.
- **ASK:** “That was my experience, and yours is unique to you. What thoughts do you have?”

Based on Miller W, Rollnick S. Motivational Interviewing: Helping people change. 3rd ed. New York:Guilford Press; 2012.



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