

Let's Talk

Season 1 – Episode 4

12/5/23

1. **Intro message** – Previously recorded
2. **Introduction** – Previously recorded
3. **Affirmation – Add music in Production Guest**

Hello...I'm Lania from the Office of Research and Child Wellbeing.

Today's affirmation is from one of the most brilliant minds of our modern era Stephen Hawking who was an English theoretical physicist, cosmologist, and author.

Stephen Hawking stated, “*Quiet people have the loudest minds.*”

4. **Explanation of what's in store – La Tanya**
 - a. That's a beautiful affirmation and a great reminder as we get into today's topic – MI & the Question-and-Answer Trap!
 - b. In our previous episodes we mentioned there are 6 traps to avoid and so far, we have discussed two - the Righting Reflex Trap and the Expert Trap. Remember, falling into these traps can keep us from doing good Motivational Interviewing when partnering with our youth and families. And research tells us it's just as important to know what NOT to do as it is to know what to do.
 - c. Michelle, to get us started thinking about the Q&A trap, I'd like to ask you and our listeners to think about the first time you met your new doctor. Ready?
 - i. How did it feel answering those very personal questions and did your doctor even give you enough time to get the information out of your mouth before going to the next question?
 - ii. I have been in that exact moment with a new doctor, and I felt as though she did not have time and I felt a little frustrated.
5. **Topic 1 – MI & The Question-and-Answer Trap – Michelle**
 - a. And La Tanya I am never going to change my doctor again because my current doctor never looks at the clock and she always answers our questions before she asks her own questions. She is the best!
 - b. **What is the Q& A trap?** The Question-and-Answer Trap is when we ask question after question, often to assess a situation, with little time for the family to respond and engage in the working relationship we're trying to build.



- c. When we are talking more than the family we have often fallen into the Question-and-Answer trap.
- d. This trap sets up an imbalance of power in our working relationship with the family.
- e. **So how do you know you are falling into the Q&A trap? Here are 5 ways to know:**
 - 1. **Asking rapid fire questions.** We know questions are a part of the process when working with families, but when we ask too many questions one after another without giving the family a chance to respond may sound more like an interrogation than building a partnership.
 - 2. **Asking more questions, without reflection.** can be damaging to the partnership you are building with the family. La Tanya's going to talk more about the OARS skills reflective listening in a moment.
 - 3. **Asking families pre-determined questions like a survey** where they would have to rate their family on a scale of 1-10 doesn't allow the family to explore their own thoughts.
 - 4. **Repeating the same question multiple times** implies judgement or coercion. It makes me think of the law shows I love to watch where they love to say – asked and answered judge...families feel that too!
 - 5. And finally, you may be in the Q&A Trap if you are too focused on **asking questions about things YOU need to know and not what the family wants to talk about.** We all have the responsibility of safety, permanency, and well-being, and we can accomplish this if we listen.
- f. I must admit...This has happened to me many times. In my eagerness and desire to help I just keep asking questions, hoping the family will hear a question that inspires them...
- g. BUT this seems to backfire on me ...when I rapid fire question after question, the family just shuts down and they just start giving me answers they think I'm looking for to end the questioning.
- h. AND I've learned that this Q&A trap bumps the families out of the driver's seat.
- i. It's a really hard lesson to learn...
- j. So La Tanya - Can you tell us more about how we can use our MI skills to avoid the Q & A trap and build a positive working relationship.

6. Supporting point – La Tanya

- a. Absolutely...Let's talk about the MI skills you learned in the tool we call the OARS.
 - i. **The O is for Open-ended questions.** These are questions the family answers with more information that will lead the family to exploring concerns, promote collaboration, and can help us to understand the family's perspective and help us avoid falling into the Q&A trap Michelle just told us about.
 - ii. **A which is for Affirmations** reminds us to use positive statements or affirmations to support the development of the family's own strengths and convey our respect for the family's efforts.
 - iii. **R is for Reflective listening.** Reflective listening is a great skill to keep you out of the Q&A trap.
 - a. **When we use reflective listening,** we repeat back to the family what we hear. This leads to all kinds of good stuff like:
 - i. Exploring the family's strengths and needs at a deeper level,
 - ii. Checking our understanding of what we have heard,
 - iii. Identifying and deflecting discord and
 - iv. Eliciting change talk or in other words, pulling out the family's own words that demonstrate their desire to change.
 - v. Reflective Listening is a really great tool to keep us out of the trap!
 - iv. Last but not least the S is for Summarizing. Summarizing the conversation or a part of a conversation helps us to
 - 1. organize what the family just shared and any agreements,
 - 2. clarify their motivation for change,
 - 3. provide contrast,
 - 4. focus the conversation and
 - 5. highlight any change talk we heard
 - v. Each part of the OARS can really keep us from falling into the Q&A trap. It is Open-ended questions, Affirmation, Reflective Listening and Summarizing what we have heard.
- b. **Supporting quote:** Ruth Messinger, a tireless advocate for social change, who mobilized American Jews and others to speak out about injustice once said...**“The difference between hearing and listening is paying attention.”**

I really like that quote and want you to hear it again... “The difference between hearing and listening is paying attention.”

7. Closing – Michelle

- a. **Main point**
 - i. The Question-and-Answer Trap is easy to fall into. When we use our OARS skills (Open-ended questions, Affirmation, Reflective Listening and Summarize), while working with families we stay out of the Q&A trap and on the road to change.
 - b. **Supporting data**
 - i. On our next episode of Let's Talk we will talk about the spirit of MI.
 - ii. As we continue our MI journey together on Let's Talk, we will continue to share tips, tools, and education on Motivational Interviewing
8. **Call to  action**
In the meantime, we would love to hear from you! So, Let's talk! Tell us what you think about the episodes, make suggestions, ask questions, or anything else you'd like to talk about. Just email us at DCFS.ORCW@illinois.gov. We can't wait to hear from you.
9. **Closing Song & Message**
 - a. I'm Michelle Moreno
 - b. and I'm La Tanya Riggs We hope you enjoyed your time with us and we can't wait for you to join us again on Let's Talk.
10. **Sponsor & Disclaimer message – Previously Recorded**
 - a. LaNia – Motivational Interviewing is a part of the Family First Prevention Services Act. To learn more visit www.dcf.illinois.gov and under the “About” tab click “Family First Prevention Services Act”. 
 - b. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is providing the content of this podcast for public service training purposes only it is neither a legal interpretation nor a statement of DCFS policy. It does not replace professional advice. Reference to any specific product, service, or entity does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by DCFS. The views or opinions expressed by employees, guests, trainers/facilitators, are their own and do not necessarily reflect the view of DCFS or any of its officials; their appearance on the podcast does not imply an endorsement of the views or opinions expressed or any entity they represent.