

University of New Mexico
Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions
Motivational Interviewing: Professional Training Videotape Series, 1998
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Tape/Part D, Chapter 4 – Case example: Elicit/provide/elicit

Therapist: Knowing that you care about your children, and you want to be a good mom, I'm wondering, what do you know about the effects of alcohol on your baby, on your baby-to-be, your pregnancy.

Client: I, I don't, I didn't think it was - I mean, I thought the crack was bad for the baby, but I didn't know that alcohol was bad.

Therapist: Well, a lot of people don't know. In fact, people are kind of surprised sometimes to know that alcohol can be harmful during a pregnancy.

Client: Well, I mean, I'm not drinking that much. I have a, I drink vodka and sometimes cranberry juice or orange juice in a tall glass, mostly juice, 2 or 3 in a day, maybe 4? Is that bad?

Therapist: Well, ah, it could be. What we know is that there is no safe level of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, and what drinking can cause is brain damage as well as complications for mom during delivery.

Client: Well, I mean, I'm not getting drunk, I can still drive my car and pick my son up from school, and stuff. It's not a lot.

Therapist: So it's hard for you to believe that the amount you're drinking could be harmful.

Client: I, I mean, I don't feel bad. I'm not getting sick, or... I guess I'm confused. I didn't really know. Um, that - that it would make a difference. I guess cause they sell it, you know, right there, I didn't have any idea.

Therapist: Right

Client: But that's not good. What - none? Have I - have I done something already? To this baby, now?

Therapist: Well, most women ask that question. They wonder, gee, you know, I have been drinking, and what could I have done already. And the truth is, what we find out is that if you stop at any point during your pregnancy you have a healthier baby.

Client: Mm hm.

Therapist: And what's important is to focus on today, and tomorrow, and what you can have some control over for the rest of your pregnancy.

Client: Mm hm.

Therapist: What would it mean to you if your baby were to have some problems related to your drinking?

Client: Well, I mean, that's why I stopped the crack, you know, I don't want this baby to have the, to have any problems, and I don't want to be using anything that's going to hurt this baby if, if I don't have to, you know, but you stop the crack, and I think I can take a drink, and that's going to be OK, but now that's not OK, and now what do I do? I mean, it's, I'm a single parent, I'm out there with a 10-year-old, I'm pregnant again, I don't have a job, I'm not feeling very good, you know, enough to go to work, and I, and here you're telling me this is bad too, and I mean, *sighs* I don't know what to, I mean, what do I do? How do – just stop everything?

Therapist: That would be my advice. But I'm hearing that's hard for you to do. You're feeling overwhelmed.

Client: That's a good word for it, overwhelmed, yeah.