10 Strategies for Evoking Change Talk

1. Ask Evocative Questions

Reasons for change:
- Why would you want to make a change in this part of your life?
- If nothing changes, what might happen? What’s at stake?
- What are other people worried about?
- What are some of your concerns about ________________?

Change in the abstract (hypothetical):
- If you decided to make a change in your diet, how might that benefit you and your oral health?
- Suppose that you did succeed and are looking back on it now: What most likely is it that worked? How did it happen?
- If you wanted to, how would you do it?
- If you were to try again, what might be the best way to do it?
- If you could make this change immediately, like magic, how might things be better?

Miracle question:
- Suppose a miracle happened and stopped drinking soda in the next six months. What would your life and health be like then? How do you think your parents would feel?

Exception question:
- What motivated you to come to the dentist consistently in the past?
- What was going on when you were keeping flossing consistently?

2. Explore pros and cons

- What are some of the advantages for keeping things just the way they are? On the other hand, what are some of the reasons for making a change?
- What do you like about __________? On the other hand, what don’t you like?

3. Ask for more detail: When a change talk theme emerges, ask for more detail.

Not ready for change:
- What might need to be different for you to think about changing?
- What would need to happen for you to think about changing?
- If you ________________, how would your life be different? What would be the first sign you _________________. How would others say you are different?
- If you were to decide one day to change, how do you think you might do it?
- What is stopping you from putting ____________ at the top of your list?
4. **Ask for an example:** When a change talk theme emerges, ask for specific examples.
   - When was the last time that happened? Give me an example. What else?

5. **Looking Back**
   - What were things like before __________?
   - How has _______________ stopped you from growing, from moving forward?
   - Way back then, what was inspiring you to ________________?

6. **Looking Forward**
   - How would you like things to turn out for you? Where would you like to be?
   - Where are you now? Where would you like to be?
   - If you could make this change immediately, by magic, how might things be better?
   - What would be the best results you could imagine if you made a change?
   - What are your goals for your teeth moving forward?

7. **Querying Extremes**
   - What is the worst thing that could happen if you stayed this way?
   - What are your worst fears about what might happen if you don’t make a change?
   - What concerns you the most about ________________?

8. **Use Change Rulers**
   - How ready are you...? - How interested are you...?
   - How important is it to you...? - How motivated are you...?
   - How committed are you...? - How much energy do you have to...
   - How confident are you...? - How hopeful are you...?

9. **Explore Goals & Values:** Ask what the person’s guiding values are.
   - What are your goals for your teeth?

10. **Come Alongside:** Explicitly side with the negative (status quo) side of ambivalence.
    - Perhaps __________ is so important to you that you won’t give it up, no matter what the cost.