

Promoting engagement with healthcare

Some of our clients will be at the start of their recovery journey and not ready to engage in discussion about their health, to access treatment or make changes to their lifestyle.

Where clients are 'pre-contemplative' about healthcare, our role is to build trust and rapport, express empathy and provide information. This might involve providing information about local GP services and supporting the client to register.

Why might clients be hesitant about the vaccine?

There are many reasons for vaccine hesitancy and these are often specific to the individual. However, we know that communities who have poorer health outcomes or experiences of healthcare may feel less able to trust healthcare services and this can lead to concerns about vaccines.

Recent data has shown this may disproportionately be the case for members of the BAME community and may be true for people with experience of homelessness.

Data has also shown that 'vaccine conspiracy theories' have a role to play in vaccine hesitancy and this spread of misinformation can erode trust. .

However, it is helpful to be aware that some individuals might find it easier to explain their vaccine hesitancy through conspiracy theories when there are also other fears and anxieties about their health involved in their decision.

What is St Mungo's role?

Our role is always to hear our clients' concerns with empathy and without judgement.

By building trust and rapport we can facilitate conversations about clients' concerns and help them to think through the pros and cons by critically assessing the information

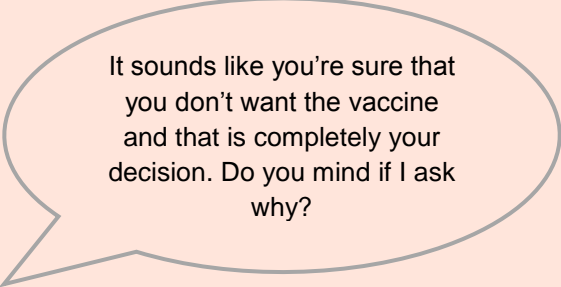
Our goal is to empower our clients to have the autonomy and self-confidence to make the choice that is right for them and their health.

What does this look like in practice?

Motivational Interviewing is a useful tool to use with clients who may be hesitant about the vaccine. Here are 4 steps to use in support work:

1. Ask open ended questions

Top Tip: your role is to get the client talking and hear concerns. You don't need to have all the answers



It sounds like you're sure that you don't want the vaccine and that is completely your decision. Do you mind if I ask why?

Other Key Phrases:

- It sounds like you're not sure if you want the vaccine, can I ask why you are unsure?

Think about Resources:

- Have a range of resources in different languages. These are available on Mungo's Net and via Groundswell
- If you are struggling to engage a client in a conversation about their own vaccination then try to keep it general. You could use a newspaper article as a way into a discussion

2. Reflect back what the client has said with empathy

Top Tip: it is important to reflect what the client's position is and show that you take it seriously

You have mentioned safety concerns. It's normal to be concerned about this..

Other Key Phrases:

- You mentioned that you're worried about whether people from your community were included in the trials. I understand why this is important. Would it be helpful if you had some more information about this?
- You said that you read that the vaccine is 'fake news'. I am not surprised that you are worried about that.
- I'm really sorry to hear someone had bad side effects from the vaccine. I can see why that might worry you. Is there a healthcare worker that you trust who you could talk to about this?
- What I'm hearing is that on the one hand you want the lockdown to end and for things to get back to how they used to be, but that you are also hesitant about getting the vaccine because you are worried the side effects are similar to withdrawal

Things to remember:

- It's normal to have questions about healthcare especially when it's new: encourage this!
- Avoid the temptation to argue with the client as this could cause them to stick more strongly to their original beliefs and could have damaging effects
- Our personal experiences play a big part in our decision-making process, it's important to hear and validate each other's experiences.

3. Ask the client to think through the pros and cons

Top Tip: find an opportunity to highlight the client's strengths

It sounds like you are doing a lot of reading on the vaccine. Can you get a variety of views so you can weigh up the different information?

Other Key Phrases:

- You have clearly thought a lot about vaccine safety. I know a lot of people are thinking about this at the moment. Have you been able to read anything?
- You rightly mentioned side effects as a possible risk, how does this balance with the risks of not taking the vaccine?
- There have been a lot of people who have now had the vaccine and without significant side effects. Has their experience had any impact on your thoughts?

4. Summarise the conversation

Top Tip: it's important to summarise the client's position regardless of what it is. This shows you've heard them, builds trust and prompts reflection.

It sounds like you are sure you don't want the vaccine & can't imagine a situation where you might change your mind

Other Key Phrases:

- Thanks for sharing your thoughts. It sounds like you are (*summarise their position*) and this is related to (*summarise their reasoning*)
- You mentioned that you might (*add any steps they might consider i.e. read information sheet*). It's been a really difficult time and it's a big decision so I understand you are feeling (*emotion*) about it.