Directions: Write a Branching Script (Adapted from Rosengren, 2009)

This exercise involves writing a script that reflects the multiple pathways that a conversation could take. The participants will work in small groups to create this branching script for a conversation where they choose the topic and responses, but the nature of client responses are preselected.

Break the training group into units of about four and make sure each has a completed script and a blank script. Put the completed script on the screen if you have an electronic copy. If not simply use a printed form as your guide.

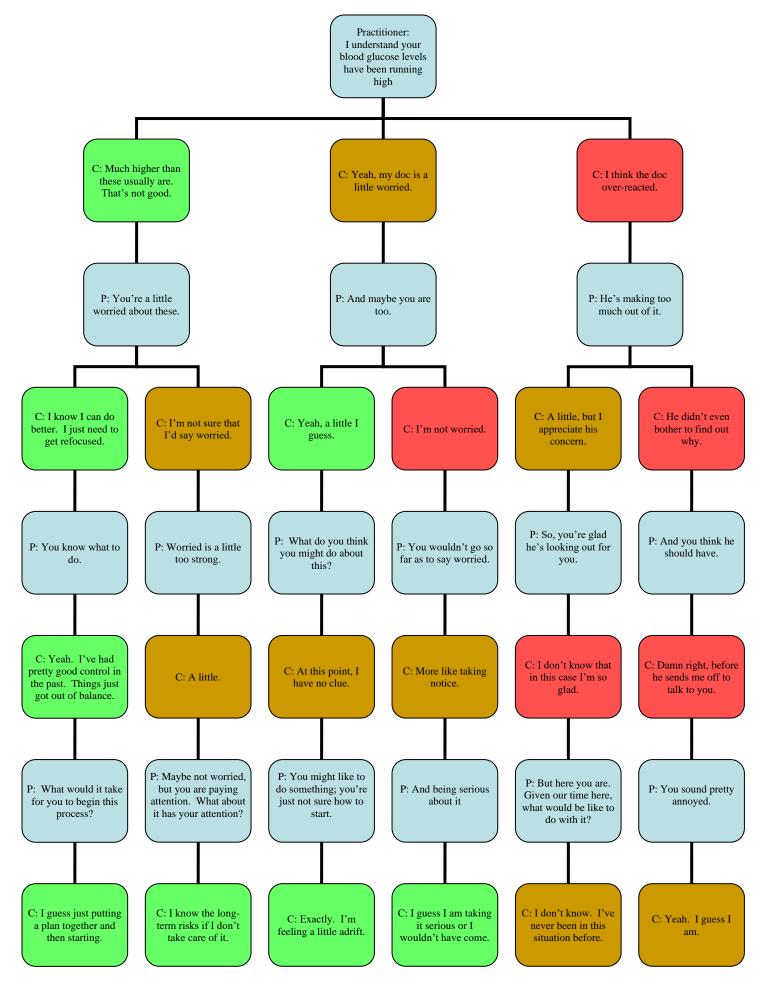
As you all know from experience conversations can go a number of ways depending how we respond. Think of a time recently when you were in a conversation about a tough subject and you thought, "How should I respond to this?" Has that happened to all of you? Now back up a minute and think about what made you stop and think, "How should I respond to this?" My guess is that you recognize that how you responded would affect how the other person would then respond. Yes?

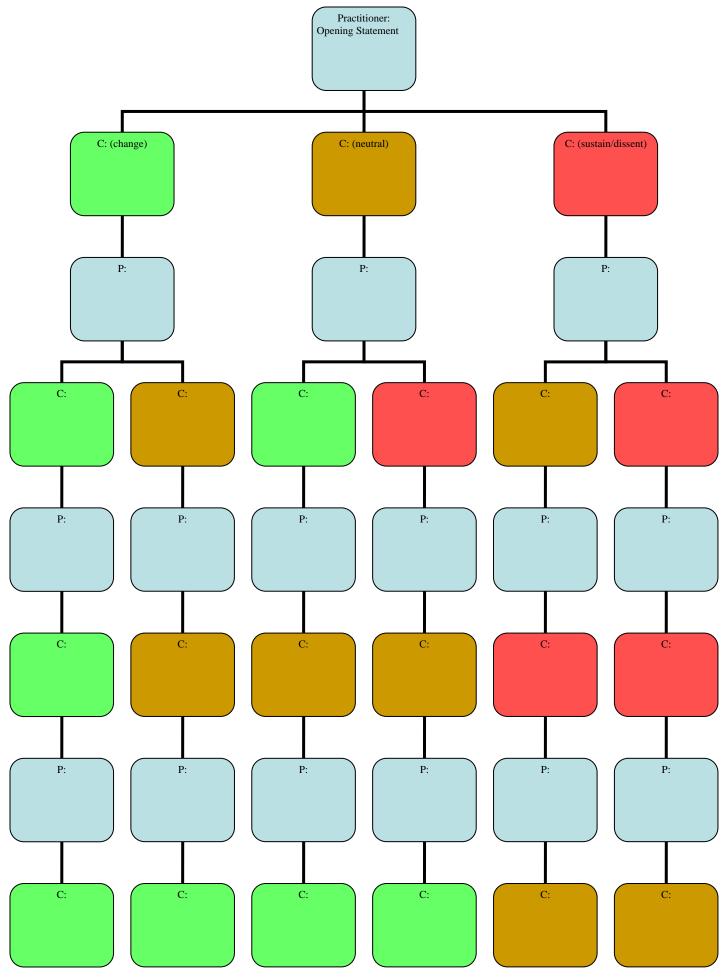
Now, let's take that a step further. In MI, we've said that our responses are important determinants of what sorts of things that clients might say. In the next exercise, we're going to take that a step further and play out several different ways a conversation might go, but all starting from the same point. Let's begin by looking at how this might work.

Everyone look at the sheet that has these boxes filled in with statements. You'll notice that we have a sheet with several different colors on it. The blue boxes all represent practitioner statements and it starts with this very first one that says, "I understand your blood glucose levels have been running high." This is a factual statement by the practitioner and pretty neutral in tone. Now, below it we see three possible client responses. You'll notice one is green. Who will read that for me? Now, as you hear that statement, how does it sound to your ears? [The hope is that practitioners will say the client is moving with us or in a positive direction for change. If that doesn't come out, you can insert that this was the idea in the developers head anyway]. Then say, who will read the tan colored one? Now that one sounds a little more neutral, doesn't it? Now, the red one – how does that sound to you? Right the client is seeming a little resistant or there is at least some discord in the relationship.

And in the next row we have all blue responses? Whose talking now? Right, the practitioner is. And what sorts of responses are we seeing here? Right, these are all reflections and we see on the next line that to each reflection we see two types of responses. Now, even good reflections don't go exactly like we'd like them, too – perhaps in part because some are focusing on the sustain or resistant side of the equation. Let's just read through the rest of these and see how these play out.

Now we get to the fun part. You'll notice you also have a blank sheet with color code boxes. Now what I want is for you to create responses that you think might lead to these different response types. So, what type of reflection might lead to a green response if a client said, "I'm really having a hard time with this homework"? What would lead to a tan response? How about a red response? Okay,, so you have the hang of it. Don't worry about your skill as a playwright or screen writer. Just imagine your client responses and see where it takes you. Then start filling in parts of the branching script. I would like you to work through this row by row, if you can. But, if it works better for you to go all the way down, you can do that as well. Remember even when you don't get the first response you expected the goal is still to elicit change talk.





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