

Exploring Motivation Without Pressure

Mood and motivation | Clinicians | 10 to 15 minutes

Explore low motivation with respect and co-design a realistic next step.

Use this dialogue when a client says they know what to do but cannot begin. Explore barriers and meaning before offering strategies. The client may need rest, practical assistance, assessment, or a different goal.

Understand the stuck point

Clinician: "When you think about starting, what feels hardest?" Client: "Everything takes too much effort." Clinician: "Even a small task feels expensive right now. Can we look at what your day is asking of you?" Ask about energy, pain, sleep, responsibilities, and available support without assuming the cause.

Find a reason that belongs to the client

Clinician: "If one thing felt a little more manageable this week, what would you want it to be?" Client: "I want to answer my sister." Clinician: "What matters about that connection?" Reflect the meaning in the client's own words before planning.

Offer a choice of next steps

Clinician: "Would you like to make a tiny version, identify support, or leave planning for another time?" If they choose a step: "Could a one sentence text count? What would make that possible?" If they decline: "What would be more useful from me today?" Review the experience without grading completion.

The barrier, personal reason, and next choice in the client's words