

Role-Play Exercise: The Interpersonal Process of Motivation

Critical Question: How does your individual experience (as staff, or student) compare between Conversations A and B?

[adapted from Alex Faris, PhD, University Health Services, University of Wisconsin Madison]

Conversation A

Person 1: Health Service Clinician, or Student Affairs Staff	Person 2: Student
<p>Situation: You are meeting with a student, sophomore computer graphics major with “insomnia,” who’s stressed out at school, not sleeping well, and has falling grades this semester. S/he acknowledges missing some of her/his morning classes, usually due to frequent late-night partying and drinking. S/he mentions the importance of bonding with friends while partying, though she does admit that a good friend is worried about her/his recent increase in partying. You believe her/his alcohol use is interfering with sleep and academic performance, so you decide to talk about it.</p> <p>Task: Persuade the student to change her/his drinking by using each of the following strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain <i>why</i> the student should make a change. Mention at least 2 specific <i>benefits</i> from the change. 2. Tell the student <i>how</i> s/he could make the change. 3. Talk about the consequences of <i>not</i> changing. 4. Tell the student you think it’s extremely <i>important</i> for her/him to make the change. 5. If you encounter <i>resistance</i>, repeat the above, perhaps more emphatically. 	<p>Situation: You are meeting with a Student Health clinician (or other staff) to determine better ways to improve your fatigue and grades. You’ve been missing some of your morning classes and you know this isn’t good, so you decide to mention this. You also admit to liking to party at night with friends and that it’s brought you all closer together. Drinking isn’t helping your creative energy, and you’re a little willing to talk about it, but you really don’t want a lecture about why “alcohol is bad.”</p> <p>Task: Provide a response to each persuasion strategy.</p>

Conversation B

Person 1: Health Service Clinician, or Student Affairs Staff	Person 2: Student
<p>Situation: Exactly the same.</p> <p>Task: Don’t persuade, offer advice, or try to fix anything. Instead, say and do the following, listening carefully to the student’s responses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You mentioned that you like to bond with your friends over some drinks. Would it be OK if we spend a couple of minutes talking about that? 2. What connection, if any, do you see between partying with your friends and attending morning classes? 3. If you ever decided to make a change in your drinking, why would you make it? 4. And if you decide to make a change, how might you go about it? 5. How important would you say it is for you to make a change, even a small one, on a 1-10 scale, where 1 is not important at all and 10 is extremely important? 6. Why are you at ____, rather than a (lower number)? 7. Give back a short summary of the student’s responses. 	<p>Situation: Exactly the same.</p> <p>Task: When you’re asked if you’re willing to talk about your drinking, you reply: “That’s fine.” Remember, you’re a student who’s not completely opposed to talking about alcohol. You’re experiencing a bit of ambivalence: You know drinking isn’t helping your creative energy and sleep issues and you’re willing to open up and consider making some changes if this staff member doesn’t get on your case.</p>