

Sample Script for Decisional Balance



Lead in

1. Deciding to engage in a specific treatment option or changing a lifestyle habit involves making trade-offs in daily life. This can put us in two minds about whether or not we even want to try to follow treatment and lifestyle advice. Exploring the trade-offs can help us to make up our minds.
2. If you like, I can help you to reach a decision, one way or the other, about whether you really want to take action. In the end, it is your choice entirely. Do you think that this would be useful to you?

[Clarify what the decision is that the patient/client is contemplating: e.g. to work on a particular lifestyle change or to choose between different treatment options.]

Sample questions for decisional balance

3. There are some good reasons why you are currently doing what you are doing. For example, it usually takes less time and effort to keep things as they are. It can also be less stressful or anxiety provoking. What would be good about not making any changes at all to what you are currently doing?...What else?...What else?
4. If you don't take any action at all and keep on doing what you are doing, what will the negative impact potentially be for you? Will there be any negative consequences for the people or things that are important to you? What will happen in the long-term? How might this impact on your health/quality of life/ability to do the things that are important to you?
5. If you do make some manageable changes in your life, then gradually add to these over time, what benefits do you think you would gain? How would your life be different? How would it impact on the things or people that are important to you? What would be the potential benefits in the long-term?
6. There can be a downside to taking action too. What could be undesirable about making the changes that you are thinking about making? How might you be able to make it easier for yourself to do things differently?

Wrap up

7. Does anything that you have mentioned make it important enough for you to want to work on this issue?

Or,

Considering the potential negative impacts and positive benefits you have mentioned and considering the people or things that are important to you in life, do these consequences and benefits make it important enough for you to want to work on this issue with me today? Or would you prefer to spend your time and energy working on something else instead, i.e. does reflecting on the trade-offs help you to make a decision one way or the other?

[Clarify RICK again for confirmation of readiness if necessary.]