Motivational Interviewing Cheat Sheet

OARS

- **Open Ended Questions**
  - “What brought you here today?”
  - “Help me...” or “Tell me more...”
  - “What do you like about...?”
  - “What will happen if you don’t declare a major?”
  - “On a scale from 1-10, how important is it for you to declare a major? Why’d you choose that #?”
  - “Suppose you don’t change, what is the worst thing that might happen?”
  - “What would you like to see different about your current situation?”

- **Affirmations**—used to recognize a student’s strengths, successes and efforts to change.
  - “Your commitment really shows by [insert reflection about what the student is doing].”
  - “It’s clear you’re really trying to change your [insert problem].”
  - “You showed a lot of [what describes the student’s behavior—strength, courage, determination] by doing that.”

- **Reflections**—staying connected to the student’s thoughts, suspending judgement, acknowledging what student has said to feel validated.
  - “It sounds like...”
  - “What I hear you saying...”
  - “It seems as if...”
  - “It feels as though...”
  - “I get the sense that you want to change, and you have concerns about [insert problem].”

- **Summaries**—recaps what has occurred, expresses interest and understanding, and highlights the main components of the discussion.
  - “You said that picking one major makes you feel like you’re closing the door to possibilities and having options is really important to you. I can see why this decision isn’t easy.”
TENANTS OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- **Expressing Empathy**—seeing the world from the student’s perspective and sharing in their experiences to ensure the student feels heard and understood.

- **Avoiding Argumentation**—avoid trying to convince the student that a problem exists or change is needed because it could cause more resistance.

- **Rolling with Resistance**—avoid eliciting resistance by not confronting the student and when resistance occurs, work to de-escalate and avoid a negative interaction.

- **Developing Discrepancies**—recognizing and examining the discrepancies between a student’s current circumstances/behavior and their values and future goals.

- **Supporting Self-Efficacy**—highlighting skills and strengths the student already has indicating their ability to change successfully.

STAGES OF CHANGE