

EARS

Stands for **E**licit, **A**mplify, **R**einforce, and **S**tart Again
A Solution-Focused Guideline and Tool for Practitioners

Elicit – Ask about positive change.

- What's been better? What have you been doing to make your life better? What has been your best day and why? What was the best part of the day? Tell me about a time since we last spoke that you avoided getting into trouble or using drugs/alcohol.
- If there has been a setback: What have you learned? What has been better this time? What has helped you continue to try? How have you managed? What has been helpful?

Amplify – Ask for details about positive change.

- When did this happen? Tell me what happened? Then what happened? Who noticed? Who else noticed? How did they respond? What did you do? What tells you they noticed? What was going on there that helped? Can you do that again somewhere else or there again? How did you do that? How did you know that was the right thing to do? How did that help? How did you know you can do more of that?

Reinforce – Make sure the client notices and values positive change.

- Nonverbal: Lean forward, raise eyebrows, pick up a pen and make notes.
- Verbal: Interrupt by asking, "Say that again!" or "You did what?" with an amazed look on your face.
- Compliment: Compliment the client for what has been done. Even compliment the client for what has not been done by saying, "I'm glad you know enough to move slowly."

Start Again – Go back to the beginning and focus on client-generated change.

- Ask "What's better since the last time we met?" "How did you do that?" "How did that help?" "How can you do more of what worked during this last week?" "Who will support your efforts?" "How can you make your life even better this coming week?"