

# #5 BARRIERS



## BUILD CONFIDENCE TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

'EXCUSES' ARE CLIENTS TELLING US ABOUT THEIR BARRIERS.

When clients tell us what is stopping them from adopting healthier behaviours we can mistakenly label these as 'excuses' and try to argue against them, or come up with strategies to overcome these obstacles.

This is ineffective and can create even more 'sustain talk'. When we come up with solutions for them it removes autonomy, positions us as superior, and puts the client in a passive role. Often clients react defensively and argue even more strongly for why barriers are unable to be overcome and why they should stay the same.

Instead, we can use open questions to help clients harness past experiences and knowledge, supporting them to create a plan to deal with barriers to change and to enhance/strengthen facilitators for change.

### **Building confidence:**

In order to feel confident they can start or change a health behaviour, clients need to identify barriers and sort them into those they feel they can change and those they feel they can't control. It is also useful to identify influences in their lives that act as facilitators of change - making change easier.

As our clients consider changing their behaviour, they will provide reasons why change is hard and what has stopped them in the past. Listen out for this 'sustain talk' and check in with them to identify:

- What could work?
- What have you already thought of trying?
- What are some new possibilities?
- What are you willing to try?
- What worked in the past?
- How could previous efforts and/or experiences help you to achieve your goals?

Collaboratively brainstorm as many possible ways they can achieve their goal, when clients can see many paths to success their hope rises.

Reinforce that:

- sustainable change that they can maintain long term takes time and that small achievable steps that add up to big results.
- ticking off small wins builds confidence - setting small daily/weekly goals that they feel they can achieve helps. Domino effect. Can lead to bigger changes and ability to tackle more over time.