Motivational Interviewing: Engaging People in Conversations about Change

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CENTER FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES
at Case Western Reserve University
A partnership between the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences & Department of Psychiatry at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine

A Technical-Assistance Center
Providing consultation, training, and evaluation for the implementation of integrated behavioral healthcare services
Training Focus

- Define Motivational Interviewing (MI) and its core elements and principles.
- Describe staff behaviors that disengage people from behavior change discussions.
- Explain the use of open-ended questions and affirmations in the process of engaging people in behavior change.
- Practice reflections and summaries when engaging individuals and families affected by mental illness, substance use disorders and legal involvement.
- Explain how to provide information and advice in a MI-consistent manner.

1. How do you currently work with people to make important life changes (e.g. avoiding criminal involvement, reducing substance use, improving mental health symptoms)?

2. What challenges do you face working with people who have legal, mental health, and/or substance use issues?

3. What have you tried that worked (helped people change)?
**What does MI have to do with me?**

1. Aligns with EBPs
2. Helps get “back in the game”
3. Changes who does the talking
4. Professional avoids doing all the work
5. Includes effective tools for resistance
6. Helps prepare offenders for change
7. Changes what is talked about
8. You can enforce orders, deliver sanctions AND be MI-consistent.

(Clark, 2006)

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**Walters, S.T., Clark, M.D., Gingerich, R., & Meltzer, M.**

*Motivating Offenders to Change: A Guide for Probation and Parole*

*Practice Monograph, National Institute of Corrections (2007)*

http://nicic.org/Library/022253

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**Principles of Effective Interventions in Criminal Justice/Corrections**

- Three main principles of effective interventions:
  - **Risk** – Directing programs toward higher risk offenders
  - **Needs** – Targeting behaviors that reduce crime
  - **Responsivity** – Being responsive to offender style
Responsivity

Being responsive or targeting known predictors of recidivism.
1. How ready is this person to change this behavior?
2. Why might this person want to change this behavior?
3. What kind of interaction will be most effective with this person?

What does MI have to do with me?

MI provides basis for carrying out the principle of responsivity
MI style makes it more likely that offender will:
1. Listen
2. Engage in the process
3. Be ready to make changes

MI Studies by Era
Hettema (N=72) and Lundahl (N=119) Meta-analyses Findings Summary
1. Robust and enduring effects when MI is added at the beginning of involvement
   - MI increases retention
   - MI increases adherence
   - MI increases staff-perceived motivation
2. The effects of motivational interviewing emerge relatively quickly
   - This is also true of other models
   - MI interventions were shorter by 2-3 sessions

Hettema and Lundahl Findings Summary
3. Superior efficacy (14-20%) to no intervention or waitlist
4. Effects of MI are highly variable across sites/providers
5. Durable effects at least 1 year post-treatment
   - MI is a brief intervention

A Brief Motivational Interviewing Intervention with Prisoners: When You Lead a Horse to Water, Can It Drink for Itself?
Anstiss, Polaschek and Wilson
Department of Corrections
Wellington, New Zealand
(2011)
Population:
- Incarcerated, high risk, male prisoners with diverse crimes (violence, sexual, property, drug, driving offenses)
- Sentences: 6+ months
- Age: 22-64
- Participants matched across groups by risk of reconviction measures, ethnicity, and age

MI Intervention:
- Manualized MI
- One, 1-hour session per week
- All participants completed in 3-5 sessions

Figure 3. Cumulative proportion surviving reconviction for four groups: MI programme only; other (i.e. criminogenic) programme only; combined programme (MI and criminogenic programme); and no programme.
People change voluntarily

Only when they become...

- Become **interested and concerned** about the need for change
- Become **convinced** change is in best interest or will benefit them more than cost them
- Organize **plan of action** that they are **committed** to implementing
- **Take the actions** necessary to make and sustain the change

Stages of Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Change</th>
<th>Characteristics/Issues</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-contemplation</td>
<td>“Nothing needs to change”</td>
<td>• Build relationship/trust</td>
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<td>• Develop discrepancy</td>
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<td>Contemplation</td>
<td>“On the Fence”</td>
<td>• Acknowledge mixed feelings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I’m considering WHY I should change”</td>
<td>• Encourage talk about change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>“Testing the Waters”</td>
<td>• Build confidence and commitment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I’m figuring out HOW to change”</td>
<td>• Info, options and advice as needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• CAREFUL – don’t push</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>“Started Moving”</td>
<td>• Plan reachable goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I’m working on reaching my goals.”</td>
<td>• Monitor and encourage attempts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Skill building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>“Holding Steady”</td>
<td>• Support change</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’ve changed, how do I keep going?”</td>
<td>• Relapse prevention plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Relapse/Recurrence</em></td>
<td>“Revisiting the Past”</td>
<td>• CAREFUL – avoid shaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I’ve gone back to old behaviors. Have I lost everything I worked for?”</td>
<td>• Learn what didn’t go as planned</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adjust plan and try again</td>
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Components of Change

- Resistance
- Ambivalence
- Motivation

Remember...

- Resistance may have been raised before session (i.e., family, employer, judge)
- Avoid becoming defensive
- Communicate respect & empathy for the client
- Evaluate the person’s motivation level - not words, rather actions over time

What is Motivational Interviewing (MI)?

Motivational Interviewing:
“A collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change.”
(Miller and Rollnick, 2013)

Criminal Justice Literature:
“A firm, fair and consistent” stance where agents work to for a positive, collaborative relationship with offenders while holding them accountable for their actions.
(Clark, 2006)
More about MI

- Listening with empathic understanding
- Evoking the person's own concerns and motivations
- Reducing resistance
- Increasing hope and optimism

The “Spirit” of MI: Elements

Collaboration
Acceptance
Evocation

Evocation

- Assumes person already has within them much of what they need.
- Genuine curiosity about person’s unique perspective and “wisdom” about the “changeable” thing. (Respect for it's purpose...)
- Staff’s task is to evoke the person’s inner knowledge, insight, understanding and/or reasoning.
- Focus on person’s strengths and resources.
Collaboration

- Belief that the person is the expert about themselves.
- A non-coercive approach.
- Resists the urge to produce the answer (fix or solve) for person. Holding the reins on our own “expertise”, using it mindfully and *not* before the person is ready to receive it.
- Working cooperatively with the person toward their own goals.
- Curiosity about person ideas and *willingness* to be influenced by them.

Acceptance

- Ensuring, either directly or implicitly, that the topic of choice and control is raised.
- Viewing the person as having the potential to move in the direction of health.
- Working to help the person recognize choices.
- Explicitly acknowledging the person has the choice to change or maintain the status quo.
- Expressing an optimism about the person’s ability to change.

Compassion

- Actively promote the person’s welfare
- Conversation is in service of person’s needs NOT the staff’s needs
- It is not sympathy or identifying with the person
  - “The capacity to see clearly into the nature of the suffering.”
  - “We need to detach ourselves from the outcome to be able to achieve compassion” – Joan Halifax
“Often the strongest predictor of treatment outcome is the [staff] to whom a client is assigned, even when assignment is random. There is a strong correlation to [staff] empathy and treatment success.”

[Miller, Taylor, & West (1980), Valle (1981)]

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**Four Processes of MI**

1. **Planning**
   - How and When?
   - Why travel?
   - Where are we going?
   - Shall we travel together?

2. **Evoking**
   - What Should I Consider?
   - How comfortable is this person in talking to me?
   - How supportive and helpful am I being?
   - Do I understand the person’s perspective and concerns? Am I able to recognize and suspend judgment?
   - How comfortable do I feel in this conversation?
   - Does this feel like a collaborative partnership?

3. **Focusing**

4. **Engaging**
Seven Things You Can Do to Make Your Life More Difficult
(Common Traps)

1. Question/Answer
2. Arguing for Change
3. Being the Expert
4. Labelling
5. Premature Focus
6. Blaming/Shaming
7. Chatting

*Warning*: These approaches may lead to Resistance or Disengagement!!

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**Question/Answer (Assessment)**

- Elicits passivity
- Closes off access to deeper levels of experience
- Interaction/relationship becomes increasingly hierarchical

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**Arguing for Change**

- Trying to fix the problem (telling them what and how) - The “Righting Reflex”
- Elicits reasons not to change “Yes, but . . .”
- Places person and staff at odds
- Establishes a power struggle you won’t win!
**Being the Expert**
- Providing direction without first helping the person determine his or her goals, direction and plans.
- Person becomes passive
- Results in halfhearted commitments

**Labelling**
- People resist labels
- Creates relationship and communication barriers
- Affects the staff’s outlook of the person and the work ahead

**Premature Focus**
- Moving too quickly or onto unimportant issues creates distance in the relationship.
- Be aware that your desire to demonstrate competence or insights may be a barrier to person’s motivation.
Blaming

- Creates a argument rather than a connection
- Focuses on “responsibility” rather than finding solutions and learning from the behavior

Chat

- “Small Talk” or “Breaking the Ice”
- Modest amounts can be helpful
- Large amounts help us feel more comfortable, but can decrease client motivation for change and retention

Seven Things You Can Do to Make Your Life More Difficult (Common Traps)
1. Question/Answer
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*Warning*: These approaches may lead to Resistance or Disengagement!!
### Communication Styles with Skills Conceptual Framework

![Communication Styles with Skills Conceptual Framework](image)

(Rollnick, et al, 2008)

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#### Guiding vs Directing

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>Directing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learn/Collaborate</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Take control</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ask permission before advice</td>
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<td>2. Give advice</td>
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<td>3. Understand their perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Instill your perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Be a resource</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Educate</td>
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<td>5. Invite them to talk about solutions</td>
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<td>5. Find the solution for the problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Learn what they tried already/what might work</td>
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<td>7. Give them instruction</td>
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<td>8. Explore Pros/Cons</td>
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<td>8. Remind them of Consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Have a Conversation</td>
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<td>9. Check-in</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Focus on Strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Focus on Deficits</td>
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Person-Centered Core Skills

Utilize O.A.R.S.

Ask Open-ended questions
(not short-answer, yes/no, or rhetorical)
Affirm the person/commitment positively on strengths, effort, intention
Reflect feelings and change talk
Summarize topic areas related to changing

Informing & Advising

Open Ended Questions?

• What concerns do you have about your drug use?
• Do you think your anger contributed to this?
• How would that make things better for your kids?
• How important is that to you?
• When did you realize you were in trouble?
• When is your court date?
• What would it take to make that change?
• Don’t you think it’s time for a change?
• How can you insure success in your efforts?
• Is this an open-ended question?

Core Skill Exercise
(triads)

Speaker:

• “Something you should understand about me is that I am ________”

Listeners:

• Ask only closed questions:
(Do you mean that you __________?):
• speaker may answer only “Yes” or “No”
Core Skill Exercise

When to Rotate Roles...

- When the two listeners have asked at least 6-8 “do you mean” questions and heard “yes” or “no” answers
  - The speaker may say a sentence or two about what he/she really meant
  - Then the next person becomes the speaker and you repeat the exercise
  - You may go around twice if needed

Affirmations

- Promote a positive relationship
  - Engagement
  - Retention (in probation)
- Focus on person (Avoid using the word “I”)
  - Are genuine, true, believable and nonjudgmental.
  - Acknowledge the person’s strengths, abilities, good intentions and efforts

Affirmations

- “You’re the kind of person that puts a lot of thought into something.”
- “You contributing some really important things here.”
- “You spend a good deal of time thinking about things.”
- “It’s important to you that your family is taken care of.”
**Reflections**
Making a statement that reflects what the person has said to you.

This might include:

- A simple restatement of their words
- Restatement with different words
- A metaphor
- Making a guess at what person means

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**Forming Reflections**

- Hypothesize - makes a guess about what the person means.
- There’s no penalty for guessing wrong.
- Form a statement, not a question.
  - Inflect your voice down at the end.
- In general, a reflection should not be longer than the person’s statement.

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**Reflections**

- Validates the individual
  - When people feel understood, they go deeper and say more
  - You are less likely to be judgmental
  - Will help you avoid taking sides
- Rule of thumb:
  - 2-3 reflective statements for every question
Types of Reflections

- Simple Reflection
  - Restate feelings, beliefs, perceptions or attitudes reported by person

- Complex Reflection
  - Reflect back more than what has been said by adding substantial meaning.
  - Make a guess at what the other feels or means
  - Continue the paragraph from where the person left off.

Levels of Reflections

- Non-verbal communication
- Verbal communication
  - **Content:**
    - “You see a connection between your drug use and the possibility of going back to jail.”
  - **Feeling:**
    - “You are worried that if you continue using you might go back to jail.”
  - **Meaning:**
    - “Your children are important to you and you want to be there for them.”

Listener: Find out what change the person is considering making, and then:

- Explain why the person should make this change
- Give at least three specific benefits that would result from making the change
- Tell the person how they could make the change
- Emphasize how important it is to change
- Persuade the person to do it.
- If you meet resistance, repeat the above.

**P.S. This is NOT Motivational Interviewing**
Common Reactions to Being Told What to Do

- Angry, agitated
- Oppositional
- Discounting
- Defensive
- Justifying
- Not understood
- Not heard
- Procrastinate
- Afraid
- Helpless, overwhelmed
- Ashamed
- Trapped
- Disengaged
- Not come back – avoid
- Uncomfortable

Same Exercise, but...
Listener uses Reflective Listening

- Non-verbal communication
- Verbal communication
  
  Content: "You see a connection between your drug use and the possibility of going back to jail."
  
  Feelings: "You are scared that if you continue using you might go back to jail."
  
  Meaning: "Your children are important to you and you want to be there for them."

Common Reactions To Being Listened To:

- Understood
- Want to talk more
- Liking the counselor
- Open
- Accepted
- Respected
- Engaged
- Able to change
- Safe
- Empowered
- Hopeful
- Comfortable
- Interested
- Want to come back
- Cooperative
Tools to avoid “Dis-engaging”

And unnecessary head trauma...

Respond to resistance – Don’t React to resistance...

Reflective Responses

Amplified Reflection
Reflect back in an exaggerated form, the person’s statement without the use of sarcasm.

Reflective Responses

Double-Sided Reflection
Reflect both sides of the ambivalence separated by “and”.
(Start with the “Sustain Talk”)
**Strategic Responses**

**Shifting Focus**
Reflect then shift the focus toward what is important to the person.

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**Strategic Responses**

**Reframe**
Acknowledge the person’s perspective in a different light.

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**Strategic Responses**

**Agreement with a Twist**
Reflection followed by a reframe.

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Strategic Responses

Emphasizing Personal Choices and Control
Verbally acknowledge the person’s power over his or her life.

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Strategic Responses

Coming Alongside
Reflect and summarize the person’s own arguments against change.

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Summaries

- Pull together information the person has said and check your understanding
- Three types of summaries
  1. Collecting – brings together interrelated elements
  2. Linking – something the person said with a prior conversation
  3. Transitional – highlights important elements followed by transition to something new
Summaries are...

...like gathering a bouquet of flowers

Person-Centered Core Skills

- Asking open-ended questions
- Affirming
- Reflective listening
- Summarizing
- Informing & advising

Informing & Advice-Giving

- Ask permission first
  - Promotes collaboration
  - Information is more likely to be heard and considered
- Three forms of permission
  - Person asks for information or advice
  - You ask permission to give it
  - Offer permission to disagree/disregard
Informing & Advice-Giving

Potential reasons for giving information

- Providing education about illnesses and treatments
- Clarifying what something means
- Giving guidance
- Providing information about resources
- Teaching

Elicit (Ask)

- Ask permission
  - May I?
  - Would you like to know about...?
  - What do you know about...?
  - What would you like to know about...?

- Clarify information needs and gaps

Provide (Inform)

- Prioritize
  - Be clear
  - Support autonomy
  - Don’t prescribe response

- Avoid jargon
  - Offer small amounts
  - Acknowledge freedom
  - Present w/o your meaning

Elicit (Ask)

- Ask for the person’s interpretation, understanding or response

- Ask open questions
  - Reflect reactions
  - Allow time to process
  - Repeat sequence as necessary

Acknowledge Choice

- Explicitly acknowledge the person has a choice
- It conveys respect and promotes the relationship
- Be sincere and genuine
- When offering suggestions – provide multiple options
**Acknowledge Choice: Samples**

1. "Only you can decide what is best for you."
2. "This is a lot to think about. It is important for you to have the opportunity to think things through, so that you can make your own decision."
3. "The decision is yours to make, no one can make it for you."
4. "Some of these things may or may not be of interest to you. Things other people have tried are..."

**Resources**


ATTC MI Website: [http://www.motivationalinterview.org](http://www.motivationalinterview.org)

NIC Website: [http://nicic.gov/MotivationalInterviewing](http://nicic.gov/MotivationalInterviewing)

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