

# Motivational Interviewing Section 17

# What is Motivational interviewing?

- *Motivational interviewing is a directive, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve **ambivalence**.*
- Compared with nondirective counseling (traditional approaches), it is more focused and goal-directed. The examination and resolution of ambivalence is its central purpose, and the counselor is intentionally directive in pursuing this goal.

# Traditional Approaches

- argues that the person has a problem and needs to change
- offers direct advice or prescribes solutions to the problem without the person's permission or without actively encouraging the person to make his or her own choices
- uses an authoritative/expert stance leaving the client in a passive role
- does most of the talking, or functions as a unidirectional information delivery system
- imposes a diagnostic label
- behaves in a punitive or coercive manner

# The “MI” Approach

(the spirit of “MI”)

- *Motivation to change is elicited from the client, and not imposed from without.*
- *It is the client's task, not the counselor's, to articulate and resolve his or her ambivalence.*
- *Direct persuasion is not an effective method for resolving ambivalence.*
- *The counseling style is generally a quiet and eliciting one.*
- *The counselor is directive in helping the client to examine and resolve ambivalence.*
- *Readiness to change is not a client trait, but a fluctuating product of interpersonal interaction.*
- *The therapeutic relationship is more like a partnership or companionship than expert/recipient roles.*

# Techniques of MI

- Seeking to understand the person's frame of reference, particularly via reflective listening.
- Expressing acceptance and affirmation.
- Eliciting and selectively reinforcing the client's own self motivational statements expressions of problem recognition, concern, desire and intention to change, and ability to change.
- Monitoring the client's degree of readiness to change, and ensuring that resistance is not generated by jumping ahead of the client.
- Affirming the client's freedom of choice and self-direction.



***There are four general  
principles behind  
Motivational Interviewing.***

## **Express Empathy-**

- Empathy involves seeing the world through the client's eyes, thinking about things as the client thinks about them, feeling things as the client feels them, sharing in the client's experiences.

## **Support Self-Efficacy (effectiveness)-**

- One source of hope for clients using the MI approach is that there is no "right way" to change, and if a given plan for change does not work, clients are only limited by their own creativity as to the number of other plans that might be tried.



## **Roll with Resistance-**

- Statements demonstrating resistance are not challenged. Instead the counselor uses the client's "momentum" to further explore the client's views. In exploring client concerns, counselors may invite clients to examine new perspectives, but counselors do not impose new ways of thinking on clients.

## **Develop Discrepancy-**

- Motivation for change occurs when people perceive a discrepancy between where they are and where they want to be. MI counselors work to develop this situation through helping clients examine the discrepancies between their current behavior and future goals.



# **Motivational Counseling Strategies**

## **Reviewing a Typical Day:**

- Here, the counselor builds rapport while gathering information. The counselor avoids a focus on "problem behaviors," focusing instead on how substance use fits in to the person's life.

## Looking Back :

- This strategy simply involves engaging in a conversation with the client about what life was like "before." Before substance use problems, before legal, work or relationship difficulties, etc.

## **Good Things and Less Good Things:**

- This strategy is simply to review what is "good" about substance use alongside a review of what is "not-so-good" about the use of substances.

## **Discussing the Stages of Change:**

- *"Pre-contemplation Stage", Contemplation Stage, Preparation Stage, Action Stage, Maintenance Stage."*



## **Assessment Feedback:**

- Another strategy involves providing feedback to the client about their behavior.



## **Values Exploration:**

- A values focus can help a person define his or her "ideal self" by exploring those behavioral ideals to which the person resonates.



## **Looking Forward:**

- It has the client envision two futures.



## **Exploring Importance and Confidence:**

- explores the client's impressions of how important is to make a change and how confident he or she is that he or she can succeed in changing.

## **Decisional Balance:**

- Counselors ask clients to identify the anticipated "pros" and "cons" of changing a behavior, then compare this with the pros and cons of not changing the behavior.

## **Change Planning:**

- To avoid a premature focus on action plans, some have taken to calling these forms, "The Next 90 days."

# Change Planning Worksheet

- The changes I want to make (or continue making) are...
- The reasons why I want to make these changes are...
- The steps I plan to take in changing are...
- The ways other people can help me are...
- I will know that my plan is working if...
- Some things that could interfere with my plan are...
- What I will do if the plan is not working...



**To learn more, go to the “MI” website:**

**<http://motivationalinterview.org/>**