

# A pocket guide to Motivational Interviewing



Developing competency in Motivational Interviewing (MI) takes practice. The best way to learn MI is with practice with feedback. ***This tool will not replace that!***

Have someone competent in MI observe a session (or recorded session with permission) and give you feedback on their observations.

What this guide will do is help you after training plan and review sessions using MI.

## **What is Motivational Interviewing?**

*Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, goal orientated style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.*

(Miller and Rollnick 2013)

The essence of MI is that it is the client rather than the worker who makes the argument for change. It is not a collection of techniques but a way to guide conversation to activate a person's own motivation and resources for change.

The way in which you talk with people can substantially influence their personal motivation for behaviour change.



# Deep roots and a strong trunk helps produce fruit you are working toward



## ***The Spirit of MI***

Partnership  
Acceptance  
Compassion  
Evoking

## ***Principles (RULE)***

Avoid the righting reflex  
Understand  
Listen  
Empower

There is something in human nature that resists being coerced and told what to do. Ironically, it is acknowledging their freedom to choose and not change that sometimes makes change possible.

**What will you do to stay consistent with the spirit and principals of MI?**

## The core skills of MI

- O:** **Open questions:** to explore concerns, promote collaboration, and understand the client's perspective.
- A:** **Affirmations:** to support strengths, convey respect.
- R:** **Reflective listening:** to explore deeper, convey understanding, deflect discord, elicit change talk.
- S:** **Summarise:** to organise discussion, clarify motivation, provide contrast, focus the session and highlight change talk.

### **Reflect with each question if possible:-**

Encouraging the other person to elaborate, amplify, confirm, or correct.

- A Simple Reflection may use different words but stays at the same meaning
- A complex reflection makes a guess about what the person means. It adds something that deepens understanding and encourages further exploration.

## Use variety in your reflections:-

*Sounds like...*

*What I'm hearing is...*

*So you're saying that...*

*You're feeling like...*

*For you, it's a matter of....*

*From your point of view,...*

*You are...*

*I would imagine you...*

*Must be...*

*Through your eyes,...*

*Your belief is that...*

*Your concern is that...*

*It seems to you that...*

*You're not terribly excited about...*

*You're not much concerned about...*

*The thing that bothers you is...*

*The important thing as you see it is...*



You can get as much from reflections, even more than relying on questions.

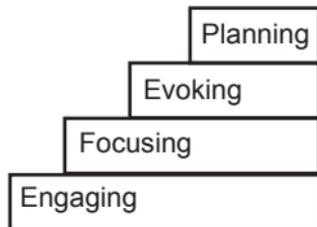
Your clients will teach you how effective your reflections are. They keep talking.

## The processes of MI

### Engaging

- Allow time to develop a trusting relationship
- Listen, understand, Avoid traps

- How comfortable is this person in talking to me?
- Do I understand this person's perspective/concerns?



### Focusing

- Help client to prioritise areas of change.
  - An agenda map helps support focusing.
  - What goals for change does this person really have?
  - Do I have a clear sense of where we are going?
  - Do I have different aspirations for change for this person?
  - Does this feel more like dancing or wrestling?
  - Does it feel like we are moving together, not in different directions?

## Evoking

- Elicit the person's own reasons for change.
  - Explore readiness, willingness and ability to change.
  - Am I steering too far or too fast in a particular direction?
  - Is any reluctance more about confidence or importance of change?
  - Elicit and respond to change talk.

## Planning

- If ready help the person establish a change plan
  - What would be a reasonable next step toward change?
  - Am I remembering to evoke rather than prescribe a plan?
  - Am I offering needed information or advice with permission?

Some tools in A Nudge in the Right Direction may be useful.

[http://www.setrust.hscni.net/pdf/A\\_nudge\\_in\\_the\\_right\\_direction\\_\(4\).pdf](http://www.setrust.hscni.net/pdf/A_nudge_in_the_right_direction_(4).pdf)

**What processes did your session focus on?**

## Traps to avoid

When working with people in a helping capacity it is easy to fall into certain traps that are less helpful.

- The assessment trap - bombarding the person with questions
- The expert trap - communicating I have all the answers
- The premature focus trap - talking about change too early
- The labelling trap - calling a problem by name
- The blaming trap
- The chat trap.

## Change talk

### The MI Hill

Preparatory change talk

Mobilising change talk



(pre)contemplation

preparation

action

Change talk is the client making statements that are in favour of change. Forms of change talk - **DARN CAT.**

### Preparatory Change Talk (Darn)

**D = Desire statements.**

Statements indicating a desire to make a change.

**A = Ability statements.**

The client's self-efficacy or belief in their ability to make changes.

**R = Reasons statements.**

Statements that reflect the reasons the client gives for considering a change. *"I have to quit smoking because of my asthma."*

**N = Need statements.**

Statements that indicate a need for change. The emphasis is more emotional rather than a more cognitive reason.

## Mobilizing Change Talk (CAT)

**C = Commitment.** Statements that are linchpins in the change talk and critical predictors of change occurring.

“I am going to..” “I intend to...” “I will ...”.

**A = Activation.** This indicates movement toward action, yet hasn't been done. “I'm ready to...” “I am prepared to” .

**T = Taking steps.** This indicates that the person has already begun changing.

**Evoking change talk** - Your goal is to strengthen change talk and/or commitment language.

Explore a typical day

Asking evocative questions

Using the importance ruler

Querying extremes

Looking back

Looking forward

Exploring goals and values



## Using scaling questions in an MI Style

1. On a scale of 0 - 10, 0 being not important at all, and 10 most important, what number would you pick for yourself as to where you are with importance on this change?
2. Why are you at a \_\_\_\_\_, and not a zero?
3. What are the 3 main reasons you want to make this change?
4. What ideas do you have about making these changes?
5. What would it take to get you from **That Number to One Number Higher**
6. What will you do next?

## Responding to change talk

When you hear change talk, respond by...

- **Elaboration** or details, "In what ways?" "How are you going to do that?" Ask for specific examples
- **Affirm** change talk through reinforcement, encouragement
- **Reflect** what the person is saying
- **Summarise**. It is like collecting flowers into a bouquet. (only pick the fresh ones).

## **Responding to sustain talk and discord**

Sustain talk is about the behaviour

Discord is about your relationship with the client

### **Reflective responses to sustain talk**

- Straight reflection
- Amplified reflections
- Double sided reflection.

### **Strategic responses**

- Emphasising autonomy
- Reframing
- Agreeing with a twist
- Listening to the cons of change
- Coming along side.

### **Spotting discord**

- Defending
- Squaring off
- Interrupting
- Disengagement.

### **Responding to discord**

- Apologising
- Shifting focus.

## Building Confidence

- Evoke confidence talk
- Confidence ruler
- Give information and advice (with permission)
- Identify and affirm strengths
- Review past success
- Brainstorm ways to change
- Reframing
- Hypothetical thinking.

## To exchange information

### **Always ask permissions to given information Use Elicit-Provide-Elicit**

Elicit they want it/ are ready for it, provide it neutrally, elicit again. (Ask / provided / ask)

Ask: What do they already know.

Provide: Seek permission to add to current understanding, correct misinformation using what research tells us or what others have found useful.

Ask: Follow-up: How does what I told you fit into your thinking/situation? Sit back and listen.

## Are they ready: signs of readiness

- **Decreased ambivalence**
- **Decreased discussion** about the problem
- **Resolve.** The client appears to have reached some resolution
- **Change talk.** You are hearing more DARN-CAT statements
- **Questions about change.** Clients may begin to ask what they could do about the problem, how other people do it
- **Envisioning.** The client may talk about how life might be after a change. They look ahead and can see difficulties or positives if a change were made
- **Experimenting.** The client may have begun experimenting with change since the last session.

### What do I do now?

Move to planning. If you have misjudged readiness the person will let you know. Remember our clients will teach us MI!

## **Reviewing a session - how did I do?**

- **Did it feel like I was wrestling or dancing?**
- **Did I seek to understand this person and their world?**
- **What was my ratio of questions versus reflections like?**
- **Did I reassure this person that ambivalence to change is normal?**
- **Did I encourage this person to talk about his/her reasons for not changing?**
- **What did I do with change talk?**
- **Did I ask permission to give information or feedback?**
- **What did I do with sustain talk or discord?**
- **Whose change is it? Did I keep the righting reflex at bay.**

**What did I do well in this session that was consistent with MI?**

**Anything I would like to do differently?**

Content for this pocket guide including The MI hill is from Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (2013). *Motivational interviewing: Helping People Change* (3rd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press and from other members of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT).

For further information look to [www.motivationalinterviewing.org](http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org)

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