Motivational Interviewing:
A Brief Introduction

Steven Malcolm Berg-Smith. MS
A.I.M. for Change (Awakening Inner Motivation)
415.933.6598
smalcolmbs@earthlink.net

0 ------1------2------3------4------5------6------7------8------9------10

“Confidence in Motivating Change”

Personal Behavior:

• Listen with presence—undivided attention
• Listen with eyes, ears, and heart—use all of your senses
• Listen with curiosity (and delight!)
• Listen with acceptance & non-judgment
• Listen with no interruptions
• Listen with silence
**What is Motivational Interviewing?**

Motivational interviewing is a client-centered, directive counseling method for enhancing intrinsic motivation for change by exploring and resolving ambivalence.

- *Miller & Rollnick, 2002*

---

---

**Primary Belief (Michelangelo Belief):** The capacity and potential for change and adherence is within every person!
Key Principles

Control and choice: People are more motivated to make change when it’s based on their own decisions and choices, rather than an authority figure telling them what to do (Reactance theory: Brehm & Brehm, 1981; Self-determination theory: Deci, 1980).

“Change talk”: People are more persuaded by what they hear themselves say than by what someone tells them (Self-perception theory: Bem, 1972).

“People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered, than by those which have come into the mind of others.” - Pascal’s Pensees (17th Century)

Elicit versus Impart: facilitate in way that draws out of participants their own wisdom, insight, clarity, inner knowing, skills, solutions, capacity, answers, resources, goals, commitment

Discrepancy: Motivation deepens and strengthens the greater the distance from where a person is (present behavior) and where they want to be (goals, values, dreams, and hopes)!

Hope and Possibility: A health & wellness professional’s belief in a client’s ability to make behavior change can influence outcome (Self-efficacy theory: Bandura, 1994; Leake and King, 1977).

Acceptance: When a person feels accepted for who they are and what they do—no matter how unhealthy or destructive—it allows them the freedom to consider change rather than needing to resist it.

Committed Decisions:

“Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth—that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.” - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Righting Reflex: Against the reflexes of the heart, avoid taking an over-functioning, fix-it, action-oriented role!

Less is more: “...one of nature’s most subtle and paradoxical laws.” - Al Huang & Lynch

Interpersonal style: motivation—and resistance—is powerfully influenced by the interpersonal style of the helping professional Miller and Rollnick, 1991, 2002)
Conversation Flow

1. Open the conversation
   - Name
   - Role
   - Time
   - Ask permission

2. Ask open-ended questions
   - Invites patient to do most of the talking
   - Focus on strengths & successes

3. Negotiate the agenda
   - Supports autonomy and choice
   - Facilitates conversation
   - Less is more!

4. Assess readiness to change
   - Supports tailoring
   - Invites “change talk”

5. Explore ambivalence
   - Most common stage of change
   - Needs to be addressed for sustained change
   - Invites “change talk”

6. Ask about “next step”
   - Assesses impact of conversation
   - Perspective often shifts in the process!

7. Close the conversation
   - Show appreciation
   - If appropriate, offer recommendation(s)
   - Voice Confidence

Ask          Listen           Summarize

Invite and encourage “change talk”
Next Step:
Strategy #1 – Assessing Readiness

• **Ask permission:** “Would it be OK if we spent a few minutes talking about ________________?”

• **Ask about readiness:** “On a scale of 0-10, how ready are you to consider _______________?” (or: How important... How confident...)

  0 -----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

• **Encourage elaboration:** “Tell me about a ____?”

• **Listen, listen, listen!**

• **Ask open-ended “scaling” questions to encourage “change talk.”**
  - Backwards question: “Why did you pick a 4 and not a 1?”
  - Forwards question: “What would need to be different for you to move from a 4 to an 8?”

• **Summarize**

• **Ask:** “Did I get it all?” (Do I understand?)

• **Ask about the next step**
  - “Where does that leave you now?”
  - “Where does __________ fit into your future?”
  - “How would you like things to turn out?”

• **Show appreciation:** “Thank you for your willingness to talk with me about ________________.”

• **Support self-efficacy:** “I’m confident that if and when you make a firm decision and commitment to ________________, you will find a way to do it!”

Berg-Smith Training and Consultation, 2005
Strategy #2 – Exploring Ambivalence

Step 1  Ask permission: “Would it be OK if we spent a few minutes talking about ______________?”

Step 2  Ask “disarming” open-ended question
- “What are some of the advantages for keeping things just the way they are?”

Step 3  Listen, listen, listen!
- Listen with presence
- Listen with eyes, ears, and heart
- Listen with curiosity
- Listen without judgment
- Listen without interruption
- Use attentive silence
- Use minimal encouragers

  
  Mm-hmm  I see
  Go on  For instance
  Oh?  Tell me more
  And  What else?

Step 4  After listening, summarize

Step 5  Ask “reverse” open-ended question:
- “What are some of the reasons for making a change?”

Step 6  Listen, listen, listen!

Step 7  After listening, summarize both sides of ambivalence. Start with the reasons for not changing, followed by reasons for changing.
- “Let me see if I understand what you’ve said...”

Step 8  Ask: “Did I get it all”?
Step 9  
Ask about the next step  
- “Where does that leave you now?”  
- “Where does ________ fit into your future?”

Step 10  
Show appreciation: “Thank you for your willingness to talk with me about ____________.”

Step 11  
Support self-efficacy: “I’m confident that if and when you make a firm decision to ____________, you will find a way to do it.

Strategy #3 – Offering Advice

- **Ask permission:** “If you’re interested, I have a recommendation (an idea) for you to consider. Would you like to hear it?”

- **Offer advice:** “Based on my experience, I would encourage you to consider ____________.”

- **Emphasize choice:** “And, I recognize it’s your choice to do so.”

- **Voice confidence:** “I’m very confident that if there comes a time when you make a decision and commitment to ____________, you’ll find a way to do it.”

- **Elicit response:** “What do you think about my recommendation (my idea)?”
Reference


The Motivational Interviewing Page: Resources on motivational interviewing, including general information, links, discussion board, training resources, and information on reprints and the latest research. [http://www.motivationalinterview.org/](http://www.motivationalinterview.org/)