

# Motivational Interviewing for Peer Specialists

Provided by Jim Winarski, MSW  
Florida Mental Health Institute

What is Motivational Interviewing?

- A way to interact with people.
- A style of counseling that helps resolve ambivalence that prevents clients from realizing personal goals.
- It is NOT primarily a collection of techniques or interventions.
- But is a series of specific practitioner behaviors directed by a guiding philosophy.

The guiding **RULE** – Philosophy of Motivational Interviewing

**R**     **Reject** the righting reflex

Trying to fix problems can reduce the likelihood of client change

**U**     **Understand** the person's motivation

We don't motivate people. We find the motivation that lies within them and help them recognize it.

**L**     **Listen** to the person.

Communicate empathy

**E**     **Empower** the person.

Change occurs when people are actively engaged.

When to use Motivational Interviewing

- The key cue to use MI is whenever a person expresses **ambivalence** about taking an action.
- Examples:
  - Person expresses objection to a plan
  - Person sounds uncertain
  - Person expresses mixed feelings
  - Person expresses a lack of confidence
  - Person lack of time, energy, or resources

## Definition:

“A person-centered goal-oriented approach for facilitating change through exploring and resolving ambivalence.”

Miller, W. R. Motivational Factors in Addiction  
Behavior. 2006

Motivational Interview is a way of being with people and its' underlying spirit is understanding and experiencing the human nature that gives rise to that way of being.

### **Traditional vs. Motivational**

#### The Counselor

Places importance on the behavior change

Controls the Interaction

May direct/select the goals the person should achieve

#### The Person

Determines the importance of the behavior change

Is listened to, shares concerns and needs

Is supported in decision about changes and goals

### **Person Focus**

- MI supports the person in articulating
  - How personally important this change (e.g., treatment) is, as opposed to how important we think it is
  - What stands in the way of making this change (time, money, cultural factors, etc.)
  - Changes that might work in their life
  - How to increase the chances of success

### **The Goal of MI**

The goal of MI is to facilitate:

- Fully informed decision making
- Deeply thought out decisions
- Internally motivated choices

Not to change behavior....though we may see changes in behavior.

Resnicow, et. al. (2002)

### **The Risk of Hope**

- Recognize that people who have suffered many losses relinquish hope as a means of survival.
- “Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane.”

Ellis Boyd, “Red Redding in the Shawshank Redemption

## Process

Stages of Change provides the frame for conversations.

Conversations about:

Desire  
Ability  
Reason  
Need  
Commitment  
Activation  
Taking steps

Conversations Include:

Open-ended questions  
Affirmations  
Reflections  
Summaries

We evoke from the person the reasons and best steps to make a change:

- Asking questions to facilitate a conversation about potential changes (Evoke/Listen for Change Talk)
- Desire: Why do you want to make the change?
- Ability: How do you want to make the change?
- Reason: What are the three best reasons to do it?
- Need: How important is it to you to make the change?
- Commitment: What are you willing to do to now?

That is the beginning of activation, setting steps and taking them.

Facilitate the conversation by using: **OARS**

- Open ended questions
- Affirmation
- Reflections
- Summaries

Then assist with developing the change plan.

## Understanding Ambivalence

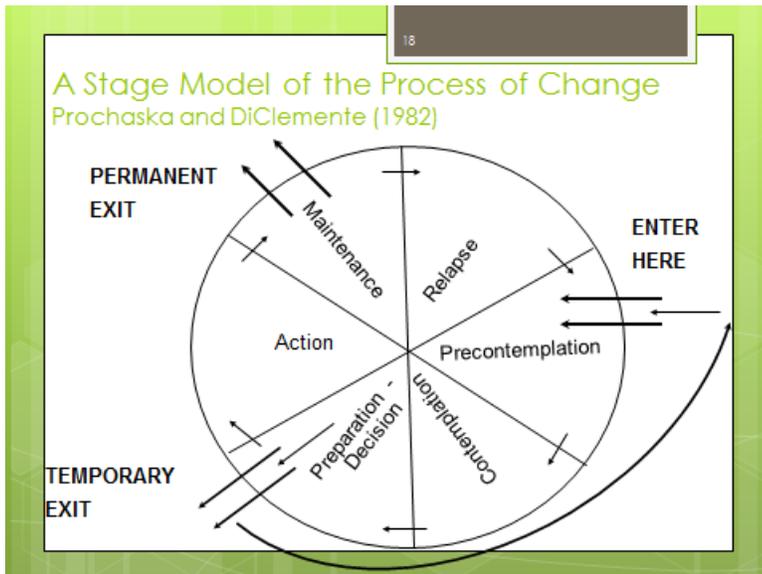
Cost of Status Quo  
Benefits of Change

Vs.

Benefits of Status Quo  
Costs of Change

## Stages of Change

- Pre-contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation/Decision
- Action
- Maintenance
- Relapse



We match the focus of our conversation with the person's stage of change.

### Pre-contemplation:

- No perceived need to change

Peer Specialists tasks:

- Raise doubt – increase the persons understanding of the risks and problems with current behavior.
- Increase awareness about possibilities.
- Create a conversation within:
  - Explore consequences
  - Explore desirable options/alternatives

### Contemplation:

- Initial awareness of a problem
- Feelings of ambivalence about change

Peer Specialists tasks:

- Explore reasons to change and the risks of not changing

- Reinforce any decisions/steps for positive change from persons past
- Explore rather than prescribe – don't give solutions.

### **Preparation for Change/Decision**

- Initial movement away from ambivalence and toward action (making a decision)
- Statements reflect the beginnings of motivation (Change talk)

Peer Specialists tasks:

- Respond positively to statements of intention
- Tip the balance from ambivalence toward taking action
- Prepare plan
- Goal setting that accounts for preferences and environment.

### **Action:**

- The person takes steps to bring about change, a specific overt modification in life style (following steps in plan)

Peer Specialists tasks:

- Support the person in taking steps in implementing the plan

### **Maintenance Stage:**

- The person sustains the change accomplished by previous actions
- Steps for maintaining long term change are different from steps for initial change

Peer Specialists tasks:

- Help the person to identify and use strategies to prevent relapse
- Help develop knowledge and skills to support progress
  - Biological-Psychological-Social Triggers
  - Expectations that helped motivate the person to take action

### **Relapse Stage:**

- Long standing change often involves setbacks. Person may step back into previous patterns
- Goals: return to process of change as soon as possible

Peer Specialist's tasks:

- Help the person to renew the process of contemplation, preparation (decision making), and action.
- Help person recognize relapse as a normal part of achieving goals that will endure.
- Focus on learning and positive reinforcement rather than punishment.

## Use Exercises:

**Negative Practice:** Experience first hand how responses that are not reflective listening can obstruct motivation and change

**Taste of Motivational Interviewing:** Experience the basic approach and “feel” of motivational interviewing.

## Forming Open Questions:

- “How can I help you?”
- “Would you like to tell me about \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “How would you like things to be different?”
- “What are the positive things and the less good things about \_\_\_\_\_?”
- “What will be different if you make the changes you are considering?”
- “What have you tried before?”
- “What do you want to do next?”

## Convert Closed Questions:

- “Are you doing OK?”
- “What’s wrong?”
- “When are you going to stop \_\_\_\_\_?”

## Affirmations:

- Statements of recognition of strengths.
- Reinforce person’s participation.
- Build rapport.
- Build confidence in ability to change.
- Enhances feelings of self efficacy.
- Must be genuine.

## Reflective Listening:

Is a process of:

- **Hearing** what the speaker is saying.
- **Making a “guess”** at what they mean.
- Verbalizing the “guess” in the form of a **statement**.

Levels of reflection:

- Simple: Repeating, rephrasing and staying close to content.
- Amplified: Paraphrasing-respond to the meaning/beliefs being expressed.
- Feelings: Respond to emotional dimension. You need a “feelings” vocabulary.

Forming reflections:

For starters:

- “It sounds like you are not ready to \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “It seems that you are having a problem with \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “It sounds like you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “So you are saying \_\_\_\_\_.”

As you improve you can sharpen the reflection:

- You’re not ready to \_\_\_\_\_.”
- You’re having a problem with \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “You’re feeling that \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “You’re are going to \_\_\_\_\_.”

Reflective Listening:

- Ensures clear communications.
- Use of transitions in the conversation.
- Is concise.
- Helps reflect ambivalence.
- Accentuates “change task”.
- Helps the person:
  - Recall and reflect upon the conversation.
  - Think of new ideas.
  - Understand the importance of the issues.
  - Plan next steps.
  - Feel more confident.

## Change Talk:

Self-motivational statements that indicate the person is oriented toward making positive change.

- We **listen** for these comments.
- Ask questions to **elicit** them.
- **Highlight** them for the person.

Listening for Change Talk:

Preparatory Language:

- **Desire** to change
- **Ability** to change (optimisim).
- **Reasons** to change (benefits).
- **Need** to change (problems with status quo).
- **Commitment** to change.

Desire statements indicate clear desire for change but stop short of commitment

- “I wish things were different.”
- “I am hoping things will change.”
- “This is not the person I want to be.”

Ability statements indicate a persons belief that they can make a change.

- “I know what I have to do, I just need to do it.”
- “I can make a change,, I just need to commit myself to it.”
- “I am going to prove everybody wrong.”

Reason statements indicate some specific advantage to making a change:

- “My family might be closer to me if \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “Maybe I’ll have more energy if \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “ I probably would feel a lot better if \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “It would be nice if I didn’t have to worry so much about \_\_\_\_\_.”

Need statements indicate that things are not working in a persons life:

- “I’ve got to make things better.”
- “I need to get a handle on things.”
- “My blood sugar can’t go on like this.”
- “This is more serious than I thought.”
- “I can’t do this anymore.”

Methods for Evoking Change Talk:

- Asking evocative questions: “What worries you about your current situation?”
- Use the importance/confidence ruler: “On a scale of one to ten with ten the highest, how important is it for you to change?”
- Exploring decisional balance: “What do you like about your present situation? What are your concerns?”
- Querying questions: “What are the results you could imagine if you make a change?”

Importance and Confidence

- Importance: Lets you know how important the issue is to the person, in the grand scheme of other important values in their life.
- Confidence: Lets you know how able the person feels he/she is to make changes towards their goals.

On the importance/confidence ruler ask the person why they chose the number they did. If they didn’t choose a high number ask them what it would take to move to a higher one.

**Practice Offering Reflections, Affirmations, and asking for elaborations in response to Change Talk.**