Motivational Interviewing with Offenders: 
Increasing the Readiness to Change

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Mr. Clark is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT) and is co-author to the book “Motivational Interviewing for Offender Rehabilitation & Reentry (pending 2016 – Guilford Press). His Center has recently published 20 web-based courses in Motivational Interviewing which is the most extensive internet training series available on the web. This “MI-20” also comes with 20 booklets to assist staff to convene in small groups. These “Peer Group 20” booklets all synch off the web-based content to enable skill-building group that fosters better implementation of this approach and increases the model’s sustainability over time. www.TrainMI.com

Mr. Clark is a contractual consultant (2015-2016) to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, Austria and has presented throughout the United States, as well as Europe, Canada, South America and the Pacific Rim. Email: buildmotivation@aol.com

Contractual training (selected list):

- United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC), Vienna, Austria
- New Zealand Department of Children, Youth & Family, Wellington, NZ
- Virginia Drug Court Association
- Louisiana Association of Drug Court Professionals
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
- New Mexico Association of Drug Court Professionals
- Douglas County Juvenile Drug Court - Omaha, Nebraska
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
- University of Missouri-Kansas City
- Manhattan Family Court, New York, NY
- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)
- Superior Court of Guam - Agana, Guam
- Puerto Rico Addiction Technology & Transfer Center (ATTC), San Juan, P.R.
- Correctional Services Of Canada
- US Department of State (Mediterranean Section) - U.S. Embassy - Malta
- Brisbane Institute for Strength-Based Practices, Brisbane, Australia
A Six-Pack of Epiphanies:  
What Treatment Court team members find out when they learn Motivational Interviewing

1. We can make our work harder. If you push, the program participant pushes back. "Getting right to it" and telling a program participant how to solve their problems only lengthens our work.

2. Much can be covered in a 10 minute encounter.

3. Behavior change is driven by motivation, not information. "We only change people who give us permission to do so."

4. Almost every piece of advice you might offer has already been thought about, mulled over, and rejected by your program person.

5. Participants will share a lot, quickly, with empathic, attentive listeners.

6. Motivated people solve their own barriers, including those facing mental health and/or AOD challenges.

Reniscow 2007

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Motivational Interviewing – Treatment Court Application Guide

In general, Motivational Interviewing (MI) is most useful:

- **(1) When the goal is an observable behavior change.**
  
  MI is a tool for increasing motivation around change. If your goal is primarily to educate, provide information, or gather information, MI is not necessarily the tool. Many of the basic listening skills may be helpful, but the "directional" components of MI are less applicable.

- **(2) When the person is more resistant, angry, or reluctant to change.**

  Some program staff take the stance that MI is best for their cooperative participants, but for challenging probationers it's best to use a tough, directive approach. The research suggests just the opposite. Easy clients tend to do well no matter what style you use, but more resistant people benefit more from an MI approach (relative to educational or confrontational approaches). **MI was designed for clients who are more reluctant to change.** When clients are doing well and they want your advice, or simply need help with planning, a direct, advice-giving style may be enough.

- **(3) When the interviewer can separate him/herself from the program participant's attitude, actions, or consequences.**

  As every successful practitioner knows, the first step in working successfully with a difficult treatment court client is to separate yourself from the person’s own choices. Though you are very willing to assist the person through referrals, advice or assistance, there ought to be a clear understanding that it is the program participant’s responsibility to take action. You don’t take on yourself, MI helps you – to help them – to take this on for themselves.

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It's a helpful way of assisting people in finding their own reasons for change.

A change of heart cannot be imposed, it must be chosen.

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NREPP
SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices

- More than 1,500 studies on MI
- Over 200 randomized clinical trials
- Since 1990, scientific publications of MI have doubled every 3 years.

Evidence-Base Practice for Engagement and Retention

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### Program Goals & Participant Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is this your hope for the participant?</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Is this the current goal of your participant?**

- **yes**
- **no**

### Benefits from Utilizing Motivational Interviewing

- **1.** MI tells us we’re not responsible for the person’s starting point, but we have considerable influence as to what happens next.

### Ambivalent uncertainty / defensiveness

Beliefs simultaneously support & argue-against change

**MI suggests:**

1. Engage and highlight their own motivations
2. Facilitate decision-making about change

**What not to do:**

- force an agreement / "we know what’s best"
- “Come back when you’re ready”
- 3. Follow rules = friends / break rules = enemies

### Conditions Staff Hope For

- **1.** Agreement with our views
- **2.** Acceptance of diagnosis
- **3.** Express and desire for help
- **4.** Show some apparent distress
- **5.** Compliance with advice

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1. MI tells us we’re not responsible for the person’s starting point, but we have considerable influence as to what happens next.

- Common explanation of one’s role
- Don’t have to wait for the person to “hit bottom” or to “get motivated.”

Benefits from Utilizing Motivational Interviewing

- 2. MI get staff back in the game of behavior change

There are Two Levels of Success

Behavior Change & Growth

Obedience / Compliance / Stability

Acting Out / Unstable Behavior

Treatment Outcome research

Staff Behavior ➔ Client Engagement

1,000+ research studies cited that a positive alliance was one of the best predictors of outcome.

(Orlinsky, Ronnestad & Willutzki, 2004)

Training in engagement is skill-based (akin to self-defense?)

Each Tx Court staff is a “contact professional”

Beyond compliance to change

Common Myth: With a substance-abuse population, coercion and a firm-hand is needed

“Confront, challenge & change.” (“hot-seat”)

Direct confrontation has little relationship with actual behavior change

Beyond compliance to change

- My neighbor the parrot: “Lock you up”
- Emotional reactivity / “It’s exhausting.....”
- My SB keynote: You changed after being confronted!
- Issue of “lying” and not being fooled or taken-in

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Lewis & Sarni
"Lying and Deception in Everyday Life"

- Two psychic needs: 1) Good 2) In Control

- Three reasons people will lie:
  1. Save face
  2. Save the face of someone they love
  3. Lie if there is an expected loss of freedom or resources

Strengths run concurrently with problems and risks

- One does not negate the other
  - It's not either/or” but “both/and"

- Strength-Based = Balance

Benefits from Utilizing Motivational Interviewing

- 3. Motivational interviewing prepares offenders for the work of change.

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Most positive behavior change occurs as a process — where the client grapples with these questions — in this order:

**Should I?**

**Can I?**

**Will I?**

**How Do I?**

### 3 Motivational Constructs

- **Why** should I do it?
  - (Importance)

- **How** would/can I do it?
  - (Confidence)

- **When** should I do it?
  - (Readiness)

### Benefits from Utilizing Motivational Interviewing

- 4. MI suggests effective ways of handling resistance and can keep difficult situations from getting worse.

### DWC's Lacking a "Culture of Motivation"

"3 Chairs"

- **Client's chair**
- **Resistance chair**
- **"Change" chair**

**Psychological Reactance**

- Decisional Balance

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Psychological Reactance

- Decisional Balance

Amplify Ambivalence

Push / Push Back

"Righting Reflex"

Discrepancy

Values/beliefs compared to Behavior/actions

Values
Ideal

Behavior
Real

Not between you; but within the person

"painful present" examines conflict to the valued, important and cherished

Difference between reluctance & resistance

- Motivation research calls us to become aware ambivalence
  - (problem talk)
Which is ambivalence-based – not resistance

- And make sure we differentiate this from (discord)
Which is relationship-based and is more consistent with the general understanding of "resistance"

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REFLECTIVE LISTENING

- One strategy: Respond to resistance with nonresistance.
- A simple acknowledgment of the client's disagreement, emotion, or perception usually permits further exploration rather than defensiveness.
  - This avoids the confrontation-denial trap.
- Remember, it's impossible to fight alone! You need two people to verbally argue.

DOUBLE SIDED REFLECTIONS
Reflecting both sides of the ambivalence.
Start with the resistance side to "open their ears" to the change talk that comes next.

You get mad when people call you alcoholic...
But after the trouble last week you recognize you have some problems.

EMPHASIZING PERSONAL CHOICE and CONTROL
Use a three-step process to convey it's the client who eventually determines what happens.

1. "It really is your choice about what you do in this situation"
2. "You may have to face (these consequences)"
3. "But ultimately, it's still your decision. No one can make you do this."

SHIFTING FOCUS
(changing the subject)
Shift the client's attention away from a stumbling block or impasse. This amounts to going around barriers rather than trying to meet them head-on.

"We've talked about what other people say about your drinking; let's now talk about what you think."

AMPLIFIED Reflection
Increasing the intensity of the resistant element
Reflect back what the client has said in an amplified or exaggerated form-to state it in an even more extreme fashion.

"So you don't have any problems, no problems at all."

Be Careful!! - don't use a sarcastic voice tone or a voice tone that suggests you "know otherwise" as may elicit hostility or resistance.
How Can I Get People To Change?
3 Common Efforts

- Muscle Approach: "If I can make them feel bad enough"
- Cheerleader Approach: "You can do it!"
- Reasoning Approach: "I've got to make them see"

Who Does The Talking?

"Talk Time Research" (CSBS)
- 1,780 words spoken in 16 minutes
  Staff - 1,261
  Participant - 519

MI Changes who does the talking

- Berg, "Stay close to the client's...."
- I have some expertise but the client is the expert on themselves.
- It's easy to overestimate how much info/advice the client needs.
  - What do they know? What have they tried?
  - "Duplication disconnects"

Benefits from Utilizing Motivational Interviewing

- 5. MI changes who does the talking.
- Staff can suffer from two big illusions:
  - "They don't know, I know." (expert trap / p. 24)
  - "Do you want to be right or do you want to be successful?"
  - "Frightening info is helpful."
- All change is self-change
  - What's (who's?) the "active ingredient?"
- 6. It will also change what is talked about

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Any speech that favors movement in the direction of change

I want to be healthy...  (approach)
I can't stand this anymore...  (avoidance)

The “sound” of Ambivalence

- “I want to work out and eat healthier. That will really help me.”
- “But I'm so busy, I don't think I could find the time”
- “But I really need to. I know I'll have more energy”
- “But I try new things like this, and I don't stick to them. I probably won’t stick to this either.”
- I want to live healthier.
  I know this is the right thing to do
- I'd like to – but it's not going to work

How Does MI Work?

Client Language → Positive Outcomes

ANTICIPATE / RECOGNIZE / REINFORCE

The Causal Chain

Staff behaviors
Talk about Change (Values) → Action - Positive Outcomes
Talk about Status Quo (“Push”) → Argue – Null Outcomes

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14
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trap</th>
<th>What NOT to Say</th>
<th>What TO Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Premature Focus Trap”</td>
<td>“This problem with your spouse…”</td>
<td>Ultimately you’re the one who has to decide if or how this issue with your spouse will continue. What do you think is the next step for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premature focus on</td>
<td>*WHY: Identifies the situation as a “problem” before the (P) has labeled it as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change (per the Judge’s</td>
<td>such.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agenda)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Confrontational-Denial Trap”</td>
<td>You need to stop making excuses and start this anger management course.</td>
<td>How would things be better for you if you found a way to stop all this trouble? There’s a part of you that doesn’t feel you need this, but I’ve also heard a part of you that’s tired of this trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguing the Positive Side</td>
<td>*WHY: Sets up an antagonistic relationship, encourages P to give the counterargument.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Labeling Trap”</td>
<td>“C’mon look at your history! Admit it, you’re an alcoholic”</td>
<td>Labels are not important right now. What is important is what you think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using labels to try and</td>
<td>*WHY: See above</td>
<td>Let’s move past what some people are calling you. I want to hear your thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gain an edge – use labels to push change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Blaming Trap”</td>
<td>Why did you go to that party when you knew it was going to get you in trouble?</td>
<td>It sounds like that situation really got you in trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking Dead or Backwards Questions</td>
<td>Did you really think that the police were going to buy that argument?</td>
<td>The police didn’t believe you. Now you’re here. What’s your next step(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*WHY: Questions in this format encourage the P to give arguments in support of past behavior.</td>
<td>You believe you got “railroaded” and unfairly convicted by the court. That leaves you frustrated. They placed you in our Treatment Court, so what can we do to finish and get dismissed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Why” questions are actually “who” questions that look to place blame and the session spirals downward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Expert Trap:”</td>
<td>You don’t have a job because you’re not putting in enough applications.</td>
<td>What ideas do you have as to how you might get a job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Unsolicited Advice</td>
<td>*WHY: Sets up an antagonistic relationship, encourages P to give the counterargument.</td>
<td>If you decided you wanted to put in a job application, how would you go about that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You need to get up first thing in the morning, get a cup of coffee, and go in to fill out that application.</td>
<td>Getting a job can be difficult. It’s hard to get into action. So, let’s back up. When you think of getting a job, what do you think about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*WHY: Encourages P to give the counterargument; Does’t encourage P to think about the plan, and thus makes it less likely that P will follow through.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Question-Answer Trap”</td>
<td>Using repeated questions without the use of OARS interspaced.</td>
<td>Avoid the “triple-trouble rule” which cautions a Judge not to use more than 3 questions without a reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*WHY: Judge is doing the talking. P is placed in a passive role of answering.</td>
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Motivational Interviewing (MI): Benefits for Treatment Courts

9 Points to Consider

1. Motivational interviewing aligns your treatment court with evidence-based practice for substance use disorders.
   In 2008, MI was listed on the SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs & Practices (NREPP). Adoption of MI allows credibility for using researched-based practice, service integrity across multiple professional domains as well as establishing demonstrations / justifications to funding sources.

2. MI prepares program participants for the work of change.
   Program participants need to prepare for change. This is as true for offenders as it is for the rest of us. We are seldom taught to prepare people for change—instead, we jump to problem solving, planning, encouraging positive talk, and the like, ignoring or bypassing the need to orient to change work. This orientation includes raising the participant's sense that change is important to them (beyond avoiding sanctions) and that they have the confidence and ability to make the change(s). Compliance is important, but change must be our final goal.

3. Research finds the use of MI increases (a) engagement and (b) retention in treatment.
   Start with engagement or don’t start at all. And one of the most consistent findings from addiction studies is that the longer one stays in treatment, the better the outcomes (NDCI, 2008). Starting into treatment (engagement, increasing motivation) and staying in treatment (retention) is a powerful combination.

4. MI equips all treatment team roles to assist change – not just the treatment provider(s).
   The unique characteristic of a treatment court is all program staff share in the treatment mission (Judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, case manager – probation officer, assessor-treatment provider, etc). Yet few beyond those who occupy traditional treatment roles are adequately trained in how to effectively interact with program participants to increase their readiness to change. MI allows all roles to increase their treatment skills. Adds a treatment “multiplier.”

5. MI extends a working knowledge of human motivation and the process of positive human behavior change.
   It is frustrating that most treatment court team members (even counselors) lack a working knowledge of human motivation and the process of positive behavior change. MI adoption will build critical knowledge about assisting change that no team member should be without.

6. Motivational interviewing suggests effective ways of handling resistance and can keep difficult situations from getting worse.
   Motivation is not a fixed characteristic, like adult height or having brown eyes. Instead, it is a condition or state, and it can be raised or lowered by how we interact with program participants. The best sanction is one that never has to be delivered. Teams understand that all staff need to develop a supportive counseling style. MI can train all staff, including Judges, lawyers, officers to improve their style of interacting. Learn to work with those who don’t want to work with you.
6. MI can be a stand-alone or used adjunct to treatment approaches or services already in place.

Treatment courts access a wide-range of community programs for their participants. Use MI as a stand-alone to increase client-engagement and increase the readiness to change. Or, use it adjunct to existing methods or treatments approaches already in place. Your treatment court and the multiple helping domains can all be “on the same page” for language, methods and consistency of service.

7. Efficient use of time-limited interactions.

Constant arguing, persuading or confronting is a poor use of the limited time that team members spend with program participants. MI can improve the value and impact of compressed interactions staff have with program participants. MI is proven to reduce aimless chatter by staff and keep staff-participant conversations focused on objectives and goals (Martino, et al, 2008). We seldom—if ever—change anyone in a short time frame, but MI offers methods and strategies to “raise the odds” and improve the likelihood that short talks will prove helpful.

8. Motivational Interviewing shifts the balance of responsibility, making treatment court staff “agents of change” rather than responsible for change.

Trying to persuade someone to do something they don’t want to do is exhausting, and many treatment team members are exhausted. When MI is practiced correctly, your program participant voices the reasons for change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Court personnel have found that using MI lowers their level of frustration and renews commitment and vitality to their work with offenders (Stinson & Clark, in press).

9. Training and coaching resources are readily available to treatment court teams and adjunct treatment court agencies (community stakeholders).

MI has been trained to the addictions field, probation & parole, detention facilities, child welfare, employment services, mental health, schools, juvenile courts, judiciary, attorneys, social work and family counselors. This approach also has fidelity measures to determine if the practice is (a) being used by team members and (b) to what extent. Blended learning formats are also available for sustainability and continued skill building. Adopt it and keep it growing over time.

References
MOVING FROM COMPLIANCE TO BEHAVIOR CHANGE: MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING AND THE FIELD OF CORRECTIONS

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Probation and parole agencies strive to reach several service goals, yet so much of a court’s focus can be compacted into two missions of critical importance. The first mission is to stabilize problem behavior and bring into control any behavior that disrupts or threatens our citizens and communities. Courts have a social mandate to bring into control that which is “out of control.” The second mission is to assist positive behavior change and to provide assistance to enable adults under supervision to attain optimum health. Both of these missions operate in tandem for the safety of our communities via the development and increased well-being of its citizens.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is an approach that is gaining notice and popularity across the field of corrections as it helps supervising officers with their mission to assist behavior change. As the name suggests, MI is a method for interviewing clients. However, many who become skilled in its use would argue that it’s more than a method for interviewing—it informs and influences direct practice efforts as well.

Motivational Interviewing has been embraced by both the U.S. Department of Justice and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) for its ability to lessen resistance and increase offender motivation (National Institute of Corrections, 2003). Motivational Interviewing gained a foothold in probation departments in the 1990s, and the use of this approach has been expanding ever since. The answer to why community-based and facility personnel would turn to the strategies and skill sets of MI may be found when one reviews several definitions of the approach. Miller and Rollnick (2002) for example, provide a formal definition of MI as a person-centered, directive method of communication for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence. Consider two more definitions, in simpler terms:

• It’s a way of using questions and statements strategically to help people think and talk in a positive direction.

• It’s an easy way of helping people find their own reasons for change.

Moving beyond traditional fields of client treatment, disciplines that work with court-mandated clients are also turning to MI.
Motivational Interviewing provides a structured and proven method for assisting behavior change.

Go back beyond the last 2 decades and you’ll find that criminal justice suffered from a lack of proven methods for reducing recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). Today, it is almost unimaginable that our field ever operated without practice methods being studied and empirically validated through rigorous science. Science-based methods for corrections work were a focus of the NIC’s Evidence-Based Policy and Practice Initiative, which included MI among eight principles of effective interventions that reduce the risks of recidivism (NIC, 2003). The NIC points to confirming research that it’s MI techniques rather than persuasion tactics that motivate individuals both for initiating and maintaining behavior change (NIC, 2003). From NIC’s perspective then, it not only seems reasonable but logical that corrections departments and others in the field, including court services, might benefit from using MI techniques.

Motivational Interviewing can help staff get back into the game of behavior change.

Historically, motivation has been viewed as a more-or-less fixed characteristic of clients. That is, an offender is usually presented with a certain motivational profile, and until he/she was ready to make changes there was not much you could do to influence shifts in behavior. Under this model, the supervising officer becomes an enforcer of the court’s orders, but not necessarily an active participant in the offender’s behavior change. Motivational Interviewing teaches justice staff that motivation is not a fixed trait—something you either have or you don’t. Instead, motivation is more akin to a “state” and a state that can be influenced.

Motivational Interviewing suggests effective tools for handling resistance and can keep difficult situations from getting worse.

Since motivation has been viewed more like a fixed trait of the defendant, it has been thought that if persons enter probation departments displaying little motivation, then the best strategy is to attempt to break through their denial, rationalization, and excuses:

- “You’ve got a problem.”
- “You have to change.”
- “You’d better change your ways, or else!”

Space prohibits a review of the many studies that have found that a confrontational counseling style limits effectiveness. Miller, Benefield, and Tonnigan (1993), however, found that a directive-confrontational counselor style produced twice the resistance, and only half as many positive client behaviors as did a supportive, client-centered approach. Problems are compounded as a confrontational style not only pushes success away, but can actually make matters worse. Although many probation staff rightly object, “We’re not counselors!—our job is to enforce the orders of the court (maintain facility safety),” this claim only serves to highlight the need for strategies to help staff get back in the game of behavior change.

Motivational Interviewing keeps officers from doing all the work, and makes interactions more change-focused.

Interactions are more change-focused when the officer understands where change comes from. Staff trained in MI can turn away from a confrontational style or logic-based approach as they learn about the process of behavior change. Many in probation believe that what causes change are the services provided to the offender, whether that involves treatment, the threat of punishment, advice, education, or monitoring their activities. These conditions and services represent only part of the picture—and not necessarily the most important part. Research shows that long-term change is more likely to occur for intrinsic reasons (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Often the things that we assume would be motivating to the offender simply aren’t. Thus, motivation is, in part, a process of finding out what things are valued and reinforcing to the individual under supervision.

Change-focused interactions place the responsibility for behavior change on the offender. During MI training, we use an attractive (and accurate) phrase: “When MI is done correctly, it is the offender who voices the arguments for change.” The first step in getting the individual thinking and talking about change is by staff establishing an empathic and collaborative relationship, which includes watching and
listening to find out what the person values and if his or her current behavior is in conflict with these deeply-held values.

Motivational Interviewing calls our attention to this key idea:

It is discrepancy that underlies the perceived importance of change; no discrepancy, no motivation. The discrepancy is generally between present status and a desired goal, between what is happening and how one would want things to be (one’s goals).

It is within this discrepancy that the material will be found for amplifying the defendant’s own reasons for change. When working with offenders who see no problem with their illegal behavior, it is essential that an officer have the skills to create an “appetite” for change. Creating this appetite for change involves creating ambivalence.

Motivational Interviewing will change who does the talking.

Motivational Interviewing techniques focus on strategically steering a conversation in a particular direction—yet steering in itself is worthless without the ability to move the conversation forward. Consider how probation officers often work much harder than their probationers. As part of a qualitative research project, Clark (2005) videotaped actual office appointments between probationers and their assigned supervising officers. The finding was that, in office visits averaging 15 minutes in length, officers “out-talk” their probationers by a large margin. For instance, in one session, 2,768 words were spoken between officer and offender. The breakdown? The officer spoke a hefty 2,087 words out of this total while the probationer spoke only 681 words. Although listening by itself is no guarantee of behavior change, using strategies to get the person talking is a prerequisite to being an effective motivational interviewer.

In interactions like this, officers are literally talking themselves out of effectiveness. The problem is not so much that the officer is doing all the talking, but rather that the offender is not. It stands to reason that the more the officer is talking, the less opportunity there is for the person who is under supervision to talk and think about change. Compliance can occur without the officer listening and the offender feeling understood—the same cannot be said if one wants to induce behavior change.

Postscript

Motivational Interviewing can enable courts and facilities to help clients build commitment and reach a decision to change. Rather than remaining “stuck” in the problem, court staff using Motivational Interviewing techniques can move those we work with toward healthier outcomes.

REFERENCES


Michael D. Clark, MSW, has provided train-the-trainer initiatives for Motivational Interviewing to departments of corrections in various states across the United States and has presented this topic as an invited guest lecturer to the 12th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice when it last convened in Salvador, Brazil. Go to: buildmotivation.com for more information on MI.
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