Helping people change:
A TASTE OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

"I hate staying in this place. I have no privacy. Everybody’s always in my business. But I guess it beats being on the streets."

Respond with a statement that shows you're listening.

Respond with a statement that guesses what the problem is feeling.

Respond with a helpful question.

Sure, I want my kids back, and I want to be a good mother, but the court’s making it impossible. There’s no way I can do everything they want me to do."

Respond with a statement that shows empathy for her difficulties.

Respond with a statement that highlights what she wants/values.

Respond with a helpful question.

"I don’t really think I have a drinking problem. It’s just that my girlfriend is overly sensitive because her dad was an alcoholic."

Respond with a statement that conveys empathy for the speaker.

Respond with a helpful question.

"It’s such a hassle to take these pills. Half the time I can’t even remember to take them. I suppose they could help, but it’s just not possible for me."

Respond with a statement that conveys empathy.

Respond with a statement that highlights the person’s dilemma/ambivalence.

Respond with a helpful question.

What’s MI?

A collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change.
A person-centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change.

Practitioner’s definition
A collaborative goal-oriented 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.

Technical definition
Or…
A way of helping people talk themselves into changing

“Talking oneself into changing”
MI conversation (spind, flow, OARS)
- Preparatory change talk
- Commitment talk
- Taking steps

“I learn what I believe as I hear myself speak.”
D. Bem

“People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered, than by those which have come into the mind of others.”
Blaise Pascal - French mathematician and philosopher (1623 –1662)

Sound familiar?
I give people my BEST ADVICE, but they won’t listen.
I EDUCATE and GIVE OPTIONS. What else can I do?
She RESISTS everything I suggest.
Some folks just DON’T WANT TO BE HELPED.
He’s in TOTAL DENIAL about his problems.
Some people just need a GOOD TALKING TO!
Dedicated to all who are weary...
of trying to educate, advise, entice, convince, coax, cajole, persuade, sweet-talk, smooth-talk, guilt-trip, bribe, manipulate, or otherwise get people to change.

Evoking from people what they already have? Giving people what they lack?

“People possess substantial personal expertise and wisdom regarding themselves and tend to develop in a positive direction, given the proper conditions and support.”

Miller & Moyers, 2006

“You already have what you need, and together we will find it.”

Miller & Rollnick, 2013

Is change possible?

Have you ever changed anyone?

Yes, yourself... but no one else.
Can you make a difference?

“They say you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink. But I say, you can salt the oats.”
Madeline Hunter, author

Is it MI?

MI: A Brief History

The spirit of MI
A mind-set and heart-set

Elements of MI spirit
Partnership
Acceptance
Compassion
Evocation

PARTNERSHIP – a collaboration, demonstrating profound respect for the person; both parties have expertise, dancing rather than wrestling, MI is not done “on” or “to” a person, but “with” and “for” the individual

ACCEPTANCE
Prizing person’s inherent worth and potential
Providing accurate empathy
Supporting autonomy
Affirming strengths

COMPASSION – coming alongside someone in their suffering; actively promoting the other’s welfare; giving priority to the person’s needs
“Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what (people) have to carry rather than stand in judgment about how they carry it.”

Fr. Greg Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart

**EVOCATION** - eliciting the person’s own knowledge, wisdom, strengths, and motivation; you have what you need and together we will find it

**A few things MI is not**

1. MI is not...
2. Just being nice to people
3. A way of tricking people into what you want them to do
4. A technique
5. A solution to all clinical problems
6. Easy to learn

**Why MI?**

- Evidence-based practice
- Kindness with skill
- Effective across populations and cultures
- Applicable to range of professional disciplines
- Effective in brief encounters
- Actively involves people in own care
- Promotes healthy “helping” role for providers
- Instills hope and fosters lasting change

**A Taste of MI**

**What are your GOALS?**

**What are your HOPES for the people you serve?**

**Why don’t people change even when faced with serious negative consequences?**

You would think...

a heart attack would be enough to persuade a man to stop smoking, change his diet, exercise more, and take his medications
that hangovers, damaged relationships, drug theft, and memory blackouts would be enough to convince a woman to stop drinking
that the risk of becoming infected with HIV would be enough to keep someone from having unprotected sex and sharing needles

You would think that...
And yet it is often not enough.

Why do people change?
Because they want to! A person's own motivation is the key to change.
And a person's motivation is greatly influenced by the provider.

Activity #1
Pairs - Interviewer and Interviewee
Separate instructions
Brief conversation

Instructions: INTERVIEWEE
You know that exercising regularly would be good for you, yet you don't seem to get around to doing it. It's always there in the back of your mind.
You think that talking with someone might help to resolve your AMBIVALENCE about exercising:

Instructions: INTERVIEWER
Your client has mixed feelings about exercising.
EDUCATE and do your best to PERSUADE him/her to exercise regularly. You do most of the talking.
Follow these steps:

1. Briefly find out the person's CONCERN
2. Name the BAD THINGS that could happen by not exercising regularly
3. List the GOOD THINGS that would result from exercising more
4. Explain HOW to start an exercise routine
5. Emphasize how IMPORTANT it is to do this

P.S. This is NOT MI!

The righting reflex...

The time is out of joint
O cursed spite that ever
I was born to set it right.

William Shakespeare (Hamlet)

The righting reflex meets ambivalence...

There's trouble.
You get resistance!
Common human reactions to the righting reflex

- Angry, agitated
- Oppositional
- Discounting
- Defensive
- Justifying
- Not understood
- Not heard
- Procrastinating

A thought...

“People are not resistant to change; they resist being changed.”

Kevin Eikenberry

“You never asked me what I wanted; you just told me what you thought I need.”

The Waifs

Activity #2

- Same pairs
- No secret instructions
- Brief conversation

4 Processes of MI

- **engaging:**
  - the relational foundation
  - Provide safe space and warm welcome:
    - show genuine interest in the person as a person

- **engaging:**
  - the relational foundation
  - How has your day been going so far?
  - How are things going in your life overall?
  - Tell me about (family, work, school, etc.)

- **focusing:**
  - the strategic direction

- **planning:**
- **evoking:**
- **focusing:**
- **engaging:**
focusing: the strategic direction

Mutually establish the agenda. Ask what the person wants to focus on. State what you wish to address (if anything).

focusing: the strategic direction

What would you like to focus on today? We could discuss A, B, C or something else. Would it be all right if we took a look at...

evoking: preparation for change

Tell me about...
What are the good things about...
What concerns do you have about...

evoking: preparation for change

If you were to make this change...
What would be your reasons to do so?
What would be your BEST reason?
How might you go about it in order to succeed?

importance ruler

Assess:
“On a scale from 0 to 10, how important is it to you to make this change?”

Explore:
“What makes you say ___ and not ___ (several numbers lower)?”
“What would it take to move from a ___ to a ____ (next highest number)?”
“How might I help you with that?”

confidence ruler

Assess:
“On a scale from 0 to 10, how confident are you that you could make this change?”

Explore:
“What makes you say ___ and not ___ (several numbers lower)?”
“What would it take to move from a ___ to a ____ (next highest number)?”
“How might I help you with that?”

planning: the bridge to change

Ask what person plans to do next; assist with developing a change plan; discuss how you and others can provide support.
planning: the bridge to change

What remaining concerns do you have?
What do you think you’ll do next?
How might I help you with that?

And, how was that?

Common responses to being listened to
- Safe
- Feel understood
- Want to talk more
- Like the counselor
- Accepted
- Respected
- Engaged
- Empowered
- Hopeful
- Comfortable
- Collaborative
- Interested
- Open to change
- Want to come back

Key ideas
- The therapeutic relationship takes the form of a partnership, not an expert-recipient stance
- Acceptance and compassion are at the heart of the conversation
- Motivation to change is elicited from individuals, not imposed on them from without

Key ideas
- Direct persuasion is not effective to resolve ambivalence or promote change
- The worker uses primarily a guiding style
- It is the task of the client to resolve his or her ambivalence and come up with the reasons for change