Reaching “Resistant Clients” with Motivational Interviewing

PRESENTED BY

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Agenda

- Motivational Interviewing and MI Spirit
- Ambivalence in the Change Process
- The Power of Change Talk
- Deconstruct “Resistance”
- MI applied to Grant and Per Diem programs
What we hope to accomplish

- By the end of this training you should be able to...

- Identify the spirit and principles of MI

- Name several MI skills to improve interactions with clients who are ambivalent

- Describe how ambivalence, change talk, sustain talk and discord affect the change process
Layperson’s Definition of MI

- “...a collaborative discussion style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change.”

- Miller and Rollnick, 2013
Practitioner’s Definition of MI

- “...a person-centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change.”

  Miler and Rollnick, 2013
A technical definition of MI

“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.”
The Spirit of MI
Elements of MI Spirit

- **Emphasized above technique**: MI is a way of being with people rather than a set of techniques for doing therapy

- **Partnership**
  - work in collaboration with the client; talk less than ½ the time

- **Acceptance**
  - based on Carl Rogers’ principles of absolute worth, autonomy, affirmation, and accurate empathy
  - acceptance of the client does not mean approving of or acquiescence with the status quo

- **Evocation**
  - we evoke or elicit vs. educate; people are experts on themselves

- **Compassion**
  - we work to promote others’ welfare; an intention in MI
The spirit of MI

- **Readiness to change is not a client trait, but a fluctuating product of interpersonal interaction.**
  - “Resistance” and "denial" are seen not as client traits, but as feedback regarding therapist behavior.
  - Discord is often a signal that the counselor is ahead of the patient, and it is a cue that the therapist needs to modify motivational strategies.
The spirit of MI

- The therapeutic relationship is more like dancing than wrestling
Resistance or Ambivalence?
Helping Ambivalent People

- “Convincing” people who are ambivalent can be counterproductive
  - Argue
  - Defend
  - Lip Service
  - Passivity
- Guiding them to explore their own reasons, ability, desire, and need to change is more effective
Change can be undermined by our Righting Reflex

- What is...the righting reflex??

- When you allow your righting reflex to kick in, you often elicit resistance in a person who is ambivalent about changing.
  - “Yes, but....”

- When doing MI you must learn to rein in your righting reflex
What’s needed instead?

“People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come in to the mind of others”

- Blaise Pascal
  - Thoughts on Mind and Style, #10 (1660)
What do you do when you do MI?

- Fundamentals for engaging
- Open-ended questions
- Affirmations
- Reflective listening
- Summarizing
Using your OARS

- Review MI definition – “a style of communication”
- Basic communication micro-skills
- Pay attention to client’s response
- If you hear change talk – stay the course
- If you hear more sustain talk or discord, change direction
MI skills - OARS

Open ended questions

- What’s the difference between open-ended questions and closed questions?
Open questions

- Do you know that being overweight increases your risk for chronic illnesses?
- “What do you know about the risks of being overweight?”

- Are you thinking about quitting smoking?
- “How do you feel about your smoking right now?”

- Has your temper been getting you in trouble lately?
- “How have you been getting along with others lately?”
MI skills - OARS

- Reflections
- A part of active listening
- What does it look like in practice?
MI skills - OARS

- Reflections
- A process in which you
  - **Hear** what the person is communicating
  - Make a **guess** about what he/she means
  - Verbalize this guess in the form of a **statement**

- Purpose: to relay your **understanding** of what the patient is trying to convey
MI skills - OARS

- **Simple reflection**
  - repeating key information that the client says to you
  - indicates that you’ve been listening
  - no added meaning

- **Complex reflection**
  - adds meaning or emphasis to what has been said
  - learning to make complex reflections is a more advanced skill
MI skills - OARS

- Reflecting is the main skill used by MI clinicians
- MI clinicians reflect back only certain aspects of what a client says
- What might you focus on reflecting back to your clients?
Listening

- O and R are all about facilitating communication through good listening
- Not listening can lead to disengagement and discord
Roadblocks to listening

1) Ordering, directing
2) Warning, threatening
3) Giving advice, making suggestions, providing solutions
4) Persuading with logic, arguing, lecturing
5) Moralizing, preaching
6) Judging, criticizing, blaming
Roadblocks to listening

7) Agreeing, approving, praising

8) Shaming, ridiculing, name calling

9) Interpreting, analyzing

10) Reasoning, sympathizing

11) Questioning, probing

12) Withdrawing, distracting, humoring, changing the subject
Change Talk and Sustain Talk

- **Change Talk** – statements that a person makes that favor making a change

- **Sustain Talk** – statements that a person makes that favor the status quo

- More Client Change Talk -> More Likely Change

- More Client Sustain Talk -> More Likely Stay the Same
Finding Change Talk

- “I wish I could find a job that would hire me, but they take one look at my record... that’s it”  
  **Desire**

- “I’ve done rehab many times, but it’s hard to stay sober once I’m back out in the real world”  
  **Ability**

- “My ex won’t let me see the kids until I get my act together”  
  **Reason**

- “Something has got to change, this isn’t working”  
  **Need**
What about Sustain Talk?

- Confronting sustain talk often creates more

- Simple Reflection and then Open Question can shift focus

- Listen for change talk

- Support autonomy (remember MI Spirit!)
Resistance

- Loaded word – can be seen a client “trait”, in reality is about relationship

- Two factors: sustain talk and discord

- Sustain Talk - statements that a person makes that favor the status quo (remember, this is normal)

- Discord – a rupture in the relationship
Dealing with Discord

- Where does it come from?
  - Previous experiences, communication roadblocks, not enough attention to engagement

- How do I notice it?
  - Arguing, Ignoring, Interrupting, Discounting

- What do I do about it?
  - Emphasize Autonomy, Apologize, Shift Focus
What does this look like in real life?

- Given what we have discussed so far, how would MI be applicable to your setting?

- What client ambivalence do you encounter?

- What discussions do you have with clients where you might use MI?
How do I learn to do MI?

- VA Trainings in TMS (if available to you)
- Motivational Interviewing, 3rd Ed., Miller and Rollnick
- MINT trainings (http://motivationalinterviewing.org)
- Research suggests that after an initial training of at least 10 hours...
  - There’s a spike in client-centered skills
  - No decrease in inconsistent behavior

- You really need follow-up
  - Without follow-up, the skills you learn in a training return to baseline levels after 4 months
  - Adding feedback and/or coaching helps to really learn the skills and to maintain them