Motivational Interviewing Summary

**What is Motivational Interviewing?**

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a client-centered method for helping people explore and resolve their ambivalence to change.

***Coaches using MI:***

* express empathy,
* develop discrepancy,
* roll with resistance, and
* support self- efficacy.

***The practice of MI has four guiding principles:***

* resist the righting reflex
* understand and explore the client’s own motivations
* listen with empathy
* empower the clients, encouraging hope and optimism.

***What is the Righting Reflex?***

The Righting Reflex is the natural tendency to believe that we *have to make it better* for another person.

***What happens if I always try to make it better for someone who is struggling?***

When we are engaged in the Righting Reflex, we tend to tell the other person what to do, how to do it, and why they should do it without talking to them and learning what ***they think.*** When we move away from the partnering stance of MI and into the expert, top-down role; we create resistance in the other person.

***What to do when you find yourself doing this in coaching?***

**Stop and Reset**: “Mrs. Hernandez, I just realized that I have been lecturing you about how you can best deal with your fear without learning what you are thinking. My mistake. I would rather back up now and hear from you instead - wherever you would like to start.”

**The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing**

***Collaboration (vs. Confrontation)***

“What do you want to do?” **VERSUS** “You’ve got to do this…”

***Evocation (Drawing Out, Rather Than Imposing Ideas)***

“What concerns you about your relationships?” **VERSUS** “You need to let go of that toxic partner.”

***Autonomy (vs. Authority)***

“How ready are you to begin making this change?” **VERSUS**

“If you delay your action steps, you will never achieve success”

***Compassion***

Compassion is defined as **sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it**.  A compassionate person demonstrates a commitment to pursue the welfare and best interests of others. This interest in the promotion of others’ welfare draws compassionate people to the helping professions. Clients find themselves naturally comfortable with and trusting of coaches who work from a spirit of compassion.

**The Principles of Motivational Interviewing**

There are four foundational principles that guide the practice of MI. The coach employing MI will hold true to these principles throughout the coaching relationship.

***Principle 1: Express Empathy***

Be non-judgmental; listen reflectively; accept ambivalence; see the world through the client’s eyes. Trust that the client possesses the capacity to heal/change. Accurately understanding the client’s experiences can facilitate change.

***Principle 2: Develop Discrepancy***

Help the client to notice the difference between their present behavior and desired lifestyle change. Clients are more motivated to change when they clearly see that what they are presently doing will not lead them to a future goal.

***Principle 3: Roll with Resistance***

Effective coaches gently reduce their clients’ defensiveness. Abruptly confronting the client’s denial can lead to drop out and relapse. When clients demonstrate resistance to change, effective coaches change strategies.

Reframe client’s limiting thinking/statements; invite clients to examine new perspectives; value clients as being their own change agents.

***Principle 4: Support Self-efficacy***

Provide hope; normalize struggle, setbacks, and failure; increase client’s self-confidence in their ability to change behaviors; highlight exceptions/other times or ways where the client has been successful.

**Motivational Interviewing – Coaching a Client’s “Talk”:**

The practice of Motivational Interviewing involves the effective use of certain techniques for eliciting clients’ change talk, reducing sustain talk, and increasing commitment to change.

Change talk involves statements or non-verbal communications in favor of change.

**OARS**

OARS is a mnemonic to remember the basic approach used in Motivational Interviewing. These are core coach behaviors employed to move the process forward by establishing a coaching alliance and eliciting discussion about change.

**O - Open-ended question** cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Instead, they require the respondent to elaborate on their points. Although closed questions have their place and are at times valuable (e.g., when collecting specific information in an assessment), open-ended questions create forward momentum used to help the clients explore their thoughts, experiences, feelings, reasons for and possibility of change.

**A - Affirmations** are statements that recognize client’s strengths. They assist in building rapport and in helping the clients see themselves in a different, more positive light. To be effective they must be congruent, genuine and emotionally impactful. The use of affirmations can help clients believe that change is possible even when previous efforts have been unsuccessful. Affirmations often involve reframing behaviors or concerns as evidence of the positive client’s qualities. Affirmations are a key element in facilitating the MI principle of Supporting Self-efficacy.

**R - Reflections** or reflective listening is perhaps the most crucial skill in Motivational Interviewing. Reflections restate or add meaning to what a client has said. They are used to help build rapport, express empathy, and encourage change.

**S - Summaries** are a reflective listening technique that involves recapturing what has been discussed in a coaching session. They can also help to shift the focus of the conversation or prepare the client to move on from a topic. Summaries communicate interest, understanding and call attention to important elements of the discussion.Summaries can highlight both sides of the client’s ambivalence about change and promote the development of discrepancy.

**Using Reflective Listening in MI**

The process of reflective listening involves hearing what the client says and either:

* repeating or paraphrasing back to the client
* reflecting the feeling you believe is behind what the client says.

***Different levels of reflective listening can be distinguished.***

**Simple Reflection**. Coach simply repeats/rephrases what the client says (nothing added)

**Amplified Reflection.** Coach exaggerates the client’s statement to the point where client may disagree with it. It is important that the coach not appear to be mocking or patronizing.

**Client:** *"But I can’t stop smoking. All of my friends smoke!"*

**Coach:** *"So, I hear you worrying that you would be too different to fit in with your friends if you quit smoking."*

**Client:** *"Well, that would make me different, although they might not really care as long as I didn’t try to get them to quit, too."*

**Double-Sided Reflection.** Coach reflects both the current, resistant statement, and a previous, contradictory statement the client has made. This is most impactful when the coach first reflects the client’s sustain talk and then contrasts it with the client’s change talk.

**Client:** *"But I can’t stop smoking. All of my friends smoke!"*

**Coach:** *"You can’t imagine how you would be able to not smoke with your friends, and at the same time you’re worrying how it’s affecting you."*

**Client:** *"Well, yes, I guess I have mixed feelings."*

**Shifting Focus.** Sometimes MI goals are better achieved by simply not addressing the resistant statement.

**Client*:*** *"But I’m just so nervous about socializing”*

**Coach***: "I hear that, although we’re not really there yet. We haven’t mentioned planning for you to begin socializing. What if we stay on topic for now - talking through the issues? Later on we can worry about what, if anything, you want to do about socializing”*

**Client:** *"Well, okay…I just wanted you to know."*

**Rolling with Resistance.** With clients who are extremely unreceptive to any idea or suggestion, this technique can be effective. It involves a paradoxical element, which can often bring the client back into a more balanced, non-combative perspective.

**Client:** *"But I’m just so nervous about socializing, I have panic attacks”*

**Coach:** *"And maybe when we’re finished here, you’ll decide that it’s just not worth it to you to socialize. Right now, it may be too difficult to make that change. That decision is entirely yours to make."*

**Client:** *"Okay."*

**Reframing.** Through the use of reframing, a Coach invites his/her clients to examine their perspectives from a new angle, thereby giving new meaning to what they have said.

**Client:** *"My sister told me I really need to take better care of my health. She’s always telling me what to do!”*

**Coach:** *“Your sister must really care a lot about you to suggest that, even though she knows you’d probably get angry with her.”*