



Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a person-centered “collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change.” The essence of MI is to offer guidance to individuals as they identify internal reasons to enact change in their life. Since its creation in 1983 to address unhealthy alcohol use, research has found MI to be effective in treating all substance use disorders, decreasing risky behaviors and increasing client engagement in treatment.^{1,2}

Spirit of MI ¹

1. Collaboration (Partnership): the individual is the expert of their life/themselves. The role of the professional is to gently guide/assist, not to direct.
2. Acceptance: each person has inherent, absolute worth that must be respected and embraced. It is essential to actively try to understand the person’s internal perspective and to provide affirmation of the individual’s unique strengths and their efforts. Acceptance involves respect for the person’s autonomy and right to determine their path.
3. Compassion: commitment to the other person’s well-being and an understanding that their needs take priority.
4. Evocation: everyone has what they need to succeed, the role of the helper is to assist the person in uncovering it.

Key Communications Skills — OARS

Open-ended questions

- “Can you tell me a little more?”
- “What would you like to see different in your life?”

Affirmation

- “Your intention was good, even if it didn’t work out the way you had hoped.”
- “You handled yourself really well in that situation.”

Reflective Listening

- “It was really hard for you to put up a boundary with your sister.”
- “On the one hand you’d like to stop using heroin and on the other hand you find it really helps you calm down when you get anxious.”

Summarizing

- “Let me know if I understand correctly...”
- “It sounds like you’re ready to make a change, but don’t know where to start between getting a new house, a job, childcare, etc.”


¹ Miller, W.R. & Rollnick, S. (2013) *Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press

² Lundahl, B., & Burke, B.L. (2009) The Effectiveness and Applicability of Motivational Interviewing: A Practice-Friendly Review of Four Meta-Analyses. *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 65(11), 1232-1245. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20638>






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MI Example

Mrs. James (Staff): Hi Sarah, I'm Mrs. James, I'll be doing your intake today. Can you tell me a little about what brought you here for treatment? 



Sarah (Client): I don't need treatment. I'm here because my judge said I had to do treatment.

Mrs. James: Oh, I see. That must be frustrating to have to be here if you don't need treatment. Any thoughts on why your judge is mandating this if you don't need it?   


Sarah: Because he's an idiot? I don't know. Just because I was dirty on my drug screen doesn't mean I need treatment. If I don't want to use I can stop.

Mrs. James: You don't see any reason to stop and if you did see a reason you'd be able to do it on your own. “” 



Sarah: Yeah. Exactly. I had a year clean before when I needed to.

Mrs. James: That's great! Congratulations! What led you to stop using that time?  




Sarah: CYF took my kids. So I stopped using to give them the clean urines they wanted and got my kids back. Wasn't a problem then either. They just don't want parents to have any fun.

Mrs. James: I applaud you; it's not easy to deal with CYF and get your kids back. 


Sarah: Damn right it isn't, and I'll do it again this time to get them back again.

Mrs. James: Ah, so CYF has your kids again. You mentioned last time you had a case with CYF you reached a year clean. Do you mind telling me about how you did that?  

Sarah: Yeah, I went on Vivitrol. My CYF worker and the judge were cool with that. I guess I could do that again.

Mrs. James: Vivitrol was effective for you, that's good. Was there anything else that you did that year?   





Sarah: Yeah, I was seeing a therapist twice a month. The doctor that gave me Vivitrol required it. I guess that wasn't too bad. She helped me find a place that will help moms find work.

Mrs. James: That is definitely really helpful. Is that something that would help you again? 




Sarah: Yeah, I definitely need another job. When I lost my last one I got really overwhelmed. It happens, you know. You get stressed and sometimes you need something to help get by.

Mrs. James: It's extremely difficult to be a single mother.  




Sarah: Yeah it is. People don't get it. Is that something this place could help me with? Can you get me connected to that job placement place?

Mrs. James: Absolutely! If you're open to it, I'd be happy to tell you about the other services we offer here.    

Sarah: Ok. I need help with winter clothes for my kids when I get them back, too.

Mrs. James: I can definitely help connect you with a local organization that provides winter jackets for kids. So here in our program we offer two forms of MAT – Vivitrol and Suboxone.   

Sarah: - Suboxone, that's the one I'd have to come every day, right?

Mrs. James: You're thinking of Methadone. Let me tell you about the difference between Methadone, Suboxone and Vivitrol and what else we can offer you here...   

MI SPIRIT



Collaboration



Acceptance



Compassion



Evocation

OARS



Open-ended questions



Affirmation



Reflective Listening



Summarizing