MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING AND READINESS FOR CHANGE

KC JOACHIM, LPC
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CENTER FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES
MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI)

- MI is a conversational approach designed to help people discover their own interest in considering and/or making a change in their lives (e.g., diet, exercise, reducing and eliminating the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs). MI helps people acknowledge and make use of their own change-talk as a source of motivation.

- https://www.centerforebp.case.edu/resources/tools/the-spirit-of-mi
4 CORE PRINCIPALS OF MI

• Express empathy
• Roll with resistance
• Develop discrepancy
• Support self-efficacy
AMBIVALENCE TO CHANGE

• Ambivalence is a natural state of uncertainty that each of us experiences throughout most change processes (e.g., dieting; exercising; maintaining health; restructuring an organization). Ambivalence occurs because of conflicting feelings about the process and outcomes of change.
READINESS FOR CHANGE

FIGURE 5. THE STAGES OF CHANGE CONTINUUM

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance

PROGRESS

RELAPSE
STAGES OF READINESS TO CHANGE: PRE–CONTEMPLATION

- Person denies the problem or does not see it as problematic.

- Person may have been sent to see practitioner by someone else.

- Practitioner should focus on raising clients’ awareness of the urgency of the issues and the pain or fear.
STAGES OF READINESS TO CHANGE: CONTEMPLATION

• Involves ambivalence or conflict between pros and cons of making a change

• Considering a change in the next six months.

• Individual acknowledges problem but not quite ready to change.

• Practitioner can discuss advantages and disadvantages of changing.

• Helpful to identify barriers or challenges to making changes.

• Small steps can be proposed toward considering a change.
STAGES OF READINESS TO CHANGE: PREPARATION

• Clients are ready to change and looking for information.
• They may have already made some changes and are wanting to make more progress.
• Members of families or groups may be at different stages of readiness.
• It is necessary to explore ambivalence of some members or to find ways to keep them from inhibiting change of larger number.
STAGES OF READINESS TO CHANGE: ACTION

• Clients are ready to take specific steps and may need little or no support from practitioner.

• If practitioner assumes clients are at this stage and yet they are still in a previous stage the practitioner will likely feel frustrated.

• Clients may feel that they should be ready to take steps they are not yet ready to take.

• Only about a third of clients come to a practitioner at this stage.
STAGES OF READINESS TO CHANGE: MAINTENANCE

• The pull to return to old behaviors is very strong.

• Clients need to develop ways to cope with temptations and to reward day-to-day successes.

• It is helpful to explore how past successes have been maintained and develop ways to maintain current changes.
STAGES OF READINESS TO CHANGE: RELAPSE/TERMINATION

- Relapse is common and preparation for it needs to be a part of the process.

- Clients may return to any of the previous stages.

- Termination is the point at which there is no temptation to return to old behavior.
No judgement instead trust

Client feels respected and heard

About change

We will not be “telling” them what to do

Empathy – meet where the client is/empowerment

Build them up not break them down.

Resistance is a dynamic between two people

No preaching or parenting

BACK TO MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING
BASIC SKILLS

• Empathy

• Listening: hear concern, ambivalence, fear and reflect it back/tell me more; want people to go deeper into themselves

• Tone of voice – can comfort and connect or create defensiveness/resistance

• Change comes from the client. Our job to be a vehicle on that path.

• Ability to just BE with the client

• Value of brief responses (have a handful)

• Ask permission to give input/changes the tone and power

• Never a blame game.
So right now ... but you may be open at another time. So what would be good about ... 

Not really wanting to make a change now, but you are not really happy with it the way it is. 

I hear the way you are thinking but I also hear these other things are difficult for you.