



Motivational Interviewing with Truant Students

A PRESENTATION BY SNOHOMISH COUNTY JUVENILE COURT

- Sara Bolton, Juvenile Probation Counselor (JPC)
 - (425) 388-7886 Sara.Bolton@snoco.org
- Todd Schedin, JPC Supervisor
 - (425) 388-7896 Todd.Schedin@snoco.org

We cannot force people to change, but . . .

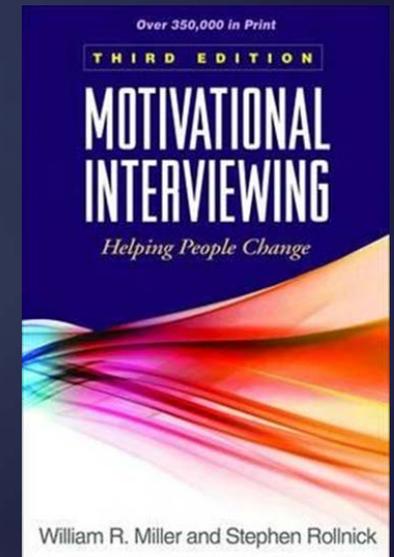
- ▶ We can **influence** people.
- ▶ The best way to influence people is to understand them as individuals and understand what motivates them (what their values are).
- ▶ People in authority are often frustrated that there is no behavior that we can force someone to do.
- ▶ The only behavior you can change is your own.
- ▶ Behavior change is a matter of motivation - Importance and Confidence



What is Motivational Interviewing?

- Evidenced-based practice for behavior change – used in a wide variety of settings and a core component for many best practice interventions and programs
- Focus is on increasing motivation to change behaviors by guiding the student or parent to identify what is important to them, barriers for change, and reasons to change.
- Strong emphasis on engaging and building relationships, evoking 'change talk' from the student or parent, and developing a collaborative plan to change the identified behavior.
- People learn about their own attitudes and beliefs in the same way that others learn about them: by hearing themselves talk !

William R. Miller & Stephen Rollnick. Motivational interviewing (2nd). New York, NY 2002.



Relationships Make The Difference

- **Empathetic** - demonstrate understanding and compassion
- **Collaborative** - avoid being the authority and telling people what they need to do
- **Supportive** - express desire for the youth to be successful
- **Non-Judgmental** - avoid the use of “need to”, “should”, “have to”, “required to”, etc.
- **Genuinely Inquisitive** - express and demonstrate a desire to understand



Stages Of Change

"Changing for Good" by Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross



▶ Pre-contemplation

"I don't have a problem"

▶ Contemplation

"I may have a problem. I can think of reasons to change my behavior and reasons to stay the same."

▶ Preparation

"I have a problem and want to do something about it!"

▶ Action

"I have a plan to address my problem and I have started doing it."

▶ Maintenance

"I have a plan that I have been doing for more than 6 months now."

▶ Relapse

"I fell off the wagon and I'm back to my old behaviors."

Recognize the Stage of Change



- “I don’t need an education, my dad didn’t graduate and he makes bank”.
- “I need to set my alarm so I can get up at 6am to catch the bus”
- “I was doing so good until I lost my alarm clock - whatever, school sucks anyways and I don’t need to go every day to pass”
- “I hate the teachers and people are rude at school, but I want to graduate so that I can get a good job in the future”
- “I’ve been getting to school on time the past week because I am going to bed earlier in the evening and my mom wakes me up”

Four Guiding Principals

- ▶ Express Empathy
- ▶ Develop Discrepancy
- ▶ Roll with Resistance
- ▶ Support Self-efficacy



Express empathy

- ▶ Purpose is to understand the youth's feelings without judgment, criticizing or blaming
- ▶ Use of reflective listening & summaries
- ▶ Ambivalence and reluctance to change is normal and to be expected
- ▶ How would you respond?
"I don't understand what's going on in math and the other kids make fun of me so I don't want to go"



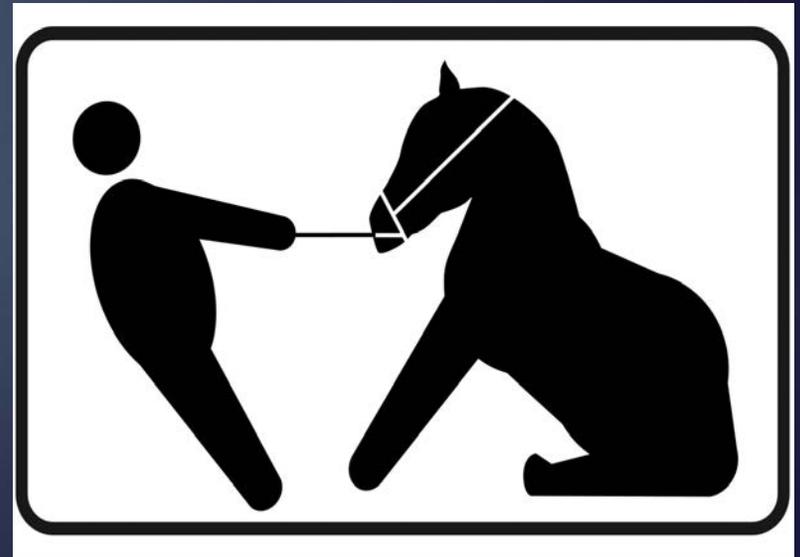
Develop discrepancy



- ▶ People are motivated to change when there is a perceived discrepancy between present behavior and important goals and values. “On the one hand you don’t go to school because you feel bullied, but on the other hand, you’d like to be the first person in your family to graduate.”
- ▶ Important to have client identify and clarify goals and values.
- ▶ Changes the client’s perspective without them feeling pressured or pushed towards behavior change.
- ▶ The client, not the interviewer, should present arguments for change. Ask questions such as “What benefits do you see in attending school more regularly?”

Roll with resistance

- ▶ The student is the most active participant in problem solving and changing the behavior
- ▶ Avoid arguing for change or forcing students to do what you want
- ▶ New perspectives are invited but not imposed
- ▶ Resistance is a signal to respond differently (You can influence whether a person is resistive or not)
- ▶ Avoid being the “expert” or “fixing the problem”



Support self-efficacy

- ▶ Change is impacted by our confidence or belief that we can change
- ▶ Enhance confidence
- ▶ Focus on past and current successes instead of the failures

“Since we met last month, it looks like your attendance has improved? What do you think has helped you be more successful?”

Versus:

“Since we met last month you continue to have unexcused absences. You don't seem to be taking this very seriously.”

- ▶ Uses the person's own resourcefulness and motivation to change



MI Skills: OARS

Open ended questions
Affirmations
Reflective listening
Summaries



o a r s

Open ended questions

- ▶ Answers will be more about thoughts and feelings about a subject rather than just facts
- ▶ Feels like an conversation rather than an interrogation
- ▶ Closed questions can be used as a beginning to elicit more information by following up with an open ended question

Examples:

- ▶ Tell me about that.....
- ▶ Explain....
- ▶ Describe....
- ▶ Ask why and how
- ▶ What do you think/ what's your opinion



Affirmations

- ▶ Builds rapport by demonstrating empathy
- ▶ Helps clients recognize their values, beliefs, goals and develops internal motivation to change behavior
- ▶ Affirms the clients past decisions and abilities- increases self-efficacy
- ▶ Avoid putting in your values or beliefs



Examples:

- ▶ “You're certainly a resourceful person to have been able to live with [the problem] this long and not fall apart”
- ▶ “Having a job and a car are important to you”
- ▶ “Your relationship with your mom is important to you and she really wants you to graduate. ”

Reflective listening

- ▶ Builds empathy
- ▶ Makes the client feel like they are being heard and are in control
- ▶ Uses their own words to elicit change talk and build discrepancy – hearing yourself talk is the best way to build motivation to change behavior!
- ▶ Simple and complex reflections

Examples:

- ▶ Simply repeating what was said
- ▶ “It sounds like....”
- ▶ “What I hear you saying....”
- ▶ “So, on one hand it sounds like.... But on the other hand....”
- ▶ “It seems as if....”



MI Skills with Stages of Change

- ▶ **Pre-contemplation** – Roll with resistance, express empathy, engagement
- ▶ **Contemplation** – Develop discrepancy, discuss pro/con of behavior change (decisional balance)
“what would the benefits be for attending math every day? Are there any downsides or concerns about attending daily?”
- ▶ **Preparation** – Scaling question of Importance and Confidence. When you hear a plan for behavior change, explore it! Identify potential barriers and identify ways to overcome those barriers.
- ▶ **Action** – Check in and provide support. Failure is an opportunity to make a better plan!

- ▶ Scaling Question for Importance and Confidence (Readiness Ruler)-
 - On a Scale of 1-10, how important is it to you to _____ (attend school)? Can you tell me why you are a _____ and not a (state lower number)? This “forces” client to verbalize reasons to change and raises importance
 - On a Scale of 1-10, how confident are you that you can _____? Why are you a _____ and not a (lower number)? This “forces” the client to verbalize their skills to change behavior and is an opportunity to discuss what they can do to raise their confidence “what would it take to be a (higher number)?”

Common traps that stall behavior change

“What we don't do is just as important as what we do” – Miller & Rollnick

- ▶ **Ordering, directing, commanding**

Human response is to push back

- ▶ **Warning, cautioning, threatening**

Human response is to deny, identify with the exception, or argue

- ▶ **The “expert trap” or fixing the problem**

“I know what is best for you” “I have what you need”

- ▶ **The premature focus trap**

Attempting to solve the problem before you establish a collaborative relationship or know values/motivation

- ▶ **Persuading with logic, arguing, lecturing**

Human response is to take the other side, information alone is not enough to change behavior



What's it look like?

- ▶ Demonstration



Additional Resources

- ▶ *Motivational Interviewing In Schools* by Rollnik, Kaplan and Rutschman
- ▶ *Motivational Interviewing with Adolescents and Young Adults* by Naar-King and Suarez
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT)
- ▶ ESD's may offer trainings

What will you do differently?

- ▶ Please share one thing that you will do differently as a result of participating in this training

