Helping Youth Change

“Truth drawn out from within is always more powerful than truth imposed from without”

Rev. Alfonso Wyatt
Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the different stages of change
2. Understand the various factors that influence change
3. Understand and practice effective communication strategies
Group Activity

Think of a behavior that you want to change (or that someone else in life thinks you should change…)

- Move to the area of the room representing the STAGE OF CHANGE where you currently are.
- How easy/hard has it been to make that change?
- How consistent has your motivation been to make the change?
- Have you been able to maintain the change without falling back in to old patterns of behavior?
Stages of Change

Pre-Contemplation → Contemplation → Determination → Action → Maintenance → Relapse → Permanent Exit

Prchaska & DiClemente’s “Six Stages of Change” From Miller & Rollnick (1991) “Motivational Interviewing”
Stages of Change

- **Pre-Contemplation**
  - “I just ain’t gonna do this. I don’t want to and I don’t have to”

- **Contemplation**
  - “I think I should change but I really don’t want to”

- **Determination/Preparation**
  - “Alright, next week I’m gonna start to make some changes”

- **Action**
  - “Yesterday was my last day being the old me; today is a new day and I already made some changes”

- **Maintenance**
  - “It’s been over a month that I changed. I’m glad I did”

- **Relapse**
  - “I went back to my old ways today”
The research on behavioral change shows that there are certain approaches that work and other approaches that do not work.
What DOESN’T Work

PERMISSIVE APPROACH

- ENABLING
- CODDLING
- FIXING

PUNITIVE APPROACH

- ZERO TOLERANCE
- TOUGH LOVE
- ACCOUNTABILITY
What DOES Work

8.2.B

BALANCED

GRADUATED REWARDS & SANCTIONS

FOCUSED

DIRECTIVE

SKILL BUILDING
It’s important to remember what’s really important in working with youth in the justice system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT’S NOT IMPORTANT</th>
<th>WHAT IS IMPORTANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your ability to “fix” the situation</td>
<td>That the young person develops the values and abilities to act responsibly over the long-term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your authority to make the youth comply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It’s not about YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!</em></td>
<td><em>It’s about THEM!!!!!!!!!!!</em></td>
</tr>
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Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a directive, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavioral change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence.
There are several core principles that govern behavioral change:

- Change is inevitable
- Change is predictable (moves through well-defined stages)
- The strategy for influencing change must match the stage of change
- Relapse is a part of recovery
Factors Influencing Change

- **Readiness**
  - Where we are in the stages of change

- **Importance**
  - The value we attach to change

- **Confidence**
  - Belief in our ability to change

Miller & Rollnick (2002)
When using MI, the counselor focuses on:

- Seeking to **understand** the youth’s frame of reference, particularly via reflective listening
- Expressing **empathy** and **acceptance** of the young person
- Eliciting and selectively **reinforcing** youth’s own statements
- Monitoring the youth’s degree of **readiness** to change and ensuring **resistance** is not generated by jumping ahead.
- Emphasizing the youth’s **ability** to choose
Ambivalence is normal & should be explored. Exploring ambivalence helps us discover:

1. Where youth are in the stages of change
2. What their values are
3. How strong their confidence is
Resistance

- Resistance is a behavior, not a character trait
- Resistance is usually a sign that:

1. We have moved further along in the stages of change than the young person
2. We need to move back to meet the young person where they are
3. Accepting resistance doesn’t mean we are condoning or approving behavior or values
Counseling Techniques

- There are some key techniques in MI:
  - Value Conflicts
  - Self Motivational Statements
  - Building Confidence
When using Motivational Interviewing the Counselor deliberately points out TENSIONS in values, wants, and behaviors. The Counselor does this by:

- Exploring youth wants and values

“I can see that being close to your family, especially your little sister, is very important to you. You don’t like being separated from them and that’s one of the biggest reasons that you hated being locked up.”
Value Conflicts

- Pointing out where values and wants are in conflict

“You don’t want to be separated from your family, but if you don’t finish drug treatment, the judge is going to detain you. I know you don’t want to go to drug treatment, but you also don’t want to go back to detention and be separated from your family.”
Value Conflicts

- Help youth evaluate the costs & benefits of change

“I know you think the drug program is a waste of time, but is it worth being separated from your family? What’s more important to you?”
# The Decision Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>CONCERNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STAYING THE SAME</strong></td>
<td>- I'll get locked up if I have another dirty urine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Feels good</td>
<td>- Costs money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Calms me down</td>
<td>- Trouble concentrating in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fun to do with friends</td>
<td>- Makes me slower on the basketball court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAKING A CHANGE</strong></td>
<td>- I don't know if I can do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I could complete Probation</td>
<td>- My friends would think I was lame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My mom would be proud</td>
<td>- I don't know what I would do to calm down when I get stressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I could do better in school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I could run faster on the basketball court</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Adapted from Orbis Partners
Self-Motivational Statements

- Statements youth make about *wants*, *values*, and their own *desire* to change.
- The Counselor’s role is to *elicit* and *affirm* youth statements that lead toward change.

“I would stop smoking weed if I had to pass a drug test to get a job, but otherwise it’s not worth it.”

“I’m not afraid to die for my gang – but I’m worried that someone may hurt my family to hurt me. I don’t want my younger brothers to get hurt.”

“I’m telling you that I dropped out of school and there’s nothing left for me to do but sell drugs. I would like to be like you with a degree and a job, but that’s impossible now, so hustling is all I can do to make money.”
Self-Motivational Statements

- Write your own self-motivational statement
Once the young person has articulated a desire for change, the counselor’s job is to build the young person’s confidence by:

• **Affirming** the desire for change

  “I’m so proud of you for deciding to go back to school. You’re a really smart guy and I know you’re going to do well. I’m excited to see how this turns out for you.”

  “I know it’s hard to give up smoking weed. I’m proud of you for just being willing to consider doing something different. I know right now you think it’s impossible, but you thought staying in this program was going to be hard too, and look how well you’ve been doing with that.”
Building Confidence

Helping youth set realistic goals

“So what do you need to do this week to start the process of getting back into school? The school usually requires a copy of your transcript. Do you think you could go to your old school on Monday or Tuesday to request a copy of your transcript?”

“So how about this: why don’t you try picking just ONE day this week that you won’t smoke weed – just to see if you can do it. How about Wednesday? Nothing ever happens on Wednesday anyway. Would you be willing to write down how it felt to not smoke weed in your journal and share those thoughts with me on Friday when we meet next?”
Effective Communication

- Our ability to counsel and direct young people is largely dependent on our communication style. Some styles of communication are effective in promoting behavioral change while others are counterproductive.
Ineffective Communication Styles

- The following communication styles are generally ineffective for motivating youth to change their behavior:
  - Enabling
    - Indirect
    - "Touchy Feely"
    - Non-Specific
    - Sympathetic
  - Authoritarian
    - Demanding
    - Hostile
    - Blaming
    - Confrontational
Effective Communication

- Empathic
- Genuine
- Honest
- Supportive
- Trustworthy
- Solution-Focused
- Hopeful
- Fair
- Consistent
- Contingency-Based
- Interested
- Enthusiastic
- Non-Argumentative
- Non-Judgmental

It is important to still be DIRECTIVE when using these communication styles.
The following listening techniques can help facilitate effective communication:

- Open-Ended Statements
- Affirmations
- Reflective Listening
- Summarizing
Open-Ended Questions

- **Open-Ended Questions:** Questions that cannot be answered with yes or no, that open up a larger conversation.

  “Do you like school?”

  “Tell me what you like about school?”
**Affirmations**

- **Affirmations**: Recognition of the client’s strengths

  “I can’t believe you got into another incident at school! You pushed another student into a wall! That’s aggressive behavior and you’re going to be in trouble if you keep doing that!”

  “Wow, more problems at school…that’s rough. Pushing someone into a wall is kind of risky when you’re on Probation for fighting in school, but what’s good is that this time you were smart enough not to throw a punch. I’m proud of you for that.”
Reflective Listening

**Reflective Listening:** Listen to the client and focus on change talk. Reflect back to them what they have told you, making connection between themes.

“But fighting is not right and it’s going to get you in trouble! You have to stop fighting! Just because the school safety officer left the room doesn’t mean you’re not going to get in trouble for fighting!”

“I hear you saying that you just get so angry when someone disrespects you. You said that you can’t control yourself when someone snaps on you. But you also said that you waited to fight until the school safety officer left the room. So you were able to control yourself for a little while, right?”
Summarizing: Announce that you are going to summarize, list selected elements of what the client has told you, and ask them to make meaning of those things.

“Well, looks like our time is up. Thanks for sharing. See you next week.”

“So what I’m getting from you is that (1) you really hate being on probation because you feel like someone is breathing down your neck; (2) you would love to get off probation as soon as possible; (3) you can’t get off probation until you’re drug free for at least 3 months. Am I getting that right? What do you think you need to do?”
Small Group Work: ROLE PLAY