

MINT Incorporated Board of Directors

Candidate Questionnaire

Chris Wagner, USA

- 1. Please describe your experience in MI in any or all of the following roles: practitioner, trainer, supervisor, researcher, and/or administrator.**

I began practicing MI in 1996 and started training internally at the medical academic center where I worked soon after and also incorporated MI into my supervision practice around the same time (then of interns and allied health professionals working at an HIV mental health and addiction clinic). I participated in the 1998 TNT and began offering public trainings after that. I have been involved in MI-related research projects since the early 2000s. Over the years, I have practiced, trained and/or supervised MI-related practice in adult outpatient MH and addictions, in residential treatment centers, in hospitals, criminal justice settings, primary care and more. While I do not use MI exclusively, it is the core and center of my practice efforts. Some years back I came to perceive/believe that MI could be used as a core approach for adult mental health focused psychotherapy, even if not originally designed for such a purpose. I was quite happy when this aspect of applying MI beyond discrete behaviour changes became a recognized part of MI-3.

I have also used MI considerably as an educator. For over 15 years I have offered a professional counselling semester-long class focused on MI, making it the core and initial approach taught to several hundred practicing mental health and addiction counselors, as well as a foundation for many local social workers, psychologists and some psychiatrists, physicians, dieticians, nurses, and other helping professionals. For the past three years, I have been actively involved in developing and implementing an MI-based patient interaction model in my university's dentistry program. Throughout, I have offered hundreds of public and private MI trainings at basic, intermediate and advanced levels, also across a range of disciplines and settings.

I have also used MI considerably in group format, beginning in the 1990s and continuing through present. In that format, I've led support groups, psychoeducational groups and psychotherapeutic groups focusing on array of issues from adjustment to chronic illness and disability, adjustment and changes in health behaviors among kidney, liver and heart transplant patients, change in and recovery from addiction habits, adjustment to college life, parenting skills, and general adult mental health issues ranging from anxiety and depression to trauma-recovery and psychotic experiences and illness.

My scholarly work in MI has been more conceptually-focused than empirical. In addition to fleshing out a model for how MI could be used with issues beyond behaviour, such as values clarification, identity issues, and relational issues, along with my primary writing partner Karen Ingersoll, I developed a model for integrating positive psychological aspects in general and positive emotions specifically into MI. Other efforts have involved incorporating aspects of interpersonal psychology into MI modelling, and concepts of how elicited vs. spontaneous change talk may differ. The most well-known of my efforts in these domains has been my involvement in developing a model of MI in groups, incorporating dyadic MI components along with empirically supported practices in group psychotherapy and the prevailing model of positive emotions in positive psychology. Empirical research projects that I've been

involved with have focused on HIV, alcohol-exposed pregnancy, addiction counselling practices and MI group practices.

2. Please describe your involvement in MINT and any activities that demonstrate your commitment or service to MINT.

Soon after participating in my 1998 TNT, I began assisting MINT with distance communications and web presence. The listservs I arranged and hosted were used by MINT members until the development of the current eForum system for member communications (the board still uses the original listserv I set up for the former MINT steering committee). To a greater or lesser degree, I've had a hand in most aspects of e-communications among MINT members since, including the current eForum. I also developed an early website for MINT under the auspices of the Mid-Atlantic Addiction Training Center, and hosted it until MINT developed its own website in the late 2000s. Although my involvement in the initial development of the MINT website was peripheral, I became involved again after initial development and was substantially involved in the updating a few years back that resulted in the current website we use. I remain involved in basic maintenance and problem-solving with that website and am currently contributing my thoughts toward the development process toward and updated and expanded e-presence of MINT.

From 2000-2008 I was involved in one role or another with the previous MINT steering committee that existed before MINT incorporated. For the first several years, my role was primarily focused on web development issues, then later in my involvement, I served as a member and committee chair. As MINT moved toward incorporation, I helped develop a regular rotation schedule for the then-developing MINT board in order to allow growth and change while maintaining some consistency and institutional knowledge, and played a role in the initial drafting of bylaws and policies as part of a MINT governance committee that helped support the transition from a loosely-connected network to an incorporated entity. In 2009, I also played a central role in organizing the Miami forum event before stepping away from participating in the central organizational aspects of MINT.

On the side, I have also played an active role in the past several ICMI research conference events, which originally were separate from MINT and more recently offered in collaboration with MINT. In 2014 and earlier this year, I served in the role of program chair, and on the organizing committee of those events.

Overall, I believe I have played a useful role in serving MINT so far, and have some contributions I'd still like to make that I think I can best offer in the role of board member.

3. MINT's strategic plan is consistent with the following three pillars:

- a. Membership Engagement**
- b. Global inclusion, outward-facing**
- c. Provide guidance, standards and resources to the world**

Please provide your input on these three pillars, on how you might contribute to achieving them, and on any other perspectives you think should be included in MINT's strategic plan.

I'd like to start by sharing some of the ideas I have for MINT that form the basis of my candidacy for MINT board service, then tie them back to the three pillars.

First, I've been astounded by the success of MINT since its incorporation. While there were a few rough patches along the way in the developmental process, MINT has survived an event that many similar organizations/movements have not survived – the transition from an informal collection of individuals supported and guided by the founders of a movement to a more formalized organization in which the original founders play peripheral roles. And the spirit of the early years still exists in

organizational policies and practices, alongside the standardization of tasks and opportunities that became necessary as the organization became a formal entity, restricted by law, and involving a significantly greater number of members. Board members are now elected to specific terms, serving on a rotating basis, and MINT has now also survived replacement of all early board members with no disruption in MINT operations or practices. While the individuals serving in various MINT roles at any given time are obviously important, organizational roles are now structured to readily pass from person to person without threatening the life or flow of the organization. Meanwhile, the values and traditions seem to be passed on without interruption or diminishment. This is a significant achievement, and one that I think may not be as recognized as it should be.

With MINT's current stability, I think that there is room for additional development/extension of some aspects of MINT, things that could make MINT more functional and useful for members and more responsive to the needs around us, while supporting and extending the "MINTness" of MINT.

At a core level, if I am elected, I want to advance consideration of the following:

- 1) Further decentralization of some aspects MINT development and decision-making and increased member involvement.
- 2) Streamlining and updating of e-presence
- 3) Advancement of MI practice at core/deep levels that retain the fundamental aspects of MI while more intentionally supporting adaptation to various cultures, languages, and settings.

I'll talk about these as they relate to the three pillars.

A. Member engagement.

I think that MINT is notably member-involved in quite a few ways, and hope to further development of this aspect. Member committees are driving a fair amount of progress in MINT, and member participation in eForum discussions, forum attendance and voting are vital to MINT functioning. What I want to do is focus on expanding what's already working and open considering to adjusting some things that I think could work better. In regard to regional/language groups, for example, the MINTs in the Nordic region, Netherlands, Oceania, etc. are already working to support MI and access to MINT trainers in their regions, and there are similar group initiatives among language-based groups in French, Spanish and more. I would like to see these groups provided with further support. One thing I think that would help for many of these groups is to have a more solid financial grounding, and to that end I would like see official MINT regional groups have a portion of their members' MINT dues earmarked to support initiatives of their choosing, such as local/language events, semi-autonomous web presence including translated documents/material, support for non-English initiatives at the international MINT forum, and other similar goals/initiatives. Without determining how regional groups should spend the money returned to them, I think the MINT board could consult with the international advisory group to consider guidelines or a range of options. With no empirical or logical basis for an amount, I might start with suggesting that 25% - 33% of funds paid to MINT, Inc, by members of regional groups be allotted for regional initiatives as they see fit. For regions in which there is not currently a formal regional/language group, I think some MINT funds should be made available for small start-up meetings or regional events that would spur greater networking, cohesiveness, and brainstorming. In addition, I think MINT funds could provide seed funding for local projects that serve underprivileged communities, both directly and in regards to training/coaching/mentorship to develop MI practice and training skills among community members. Not only would this be good for the community, and address the second and third pillars, it could likely create some powerful bonding experiences that may help support further development of MINT in different regions.

I also think all core MINT documents/communications, or at least key aspects, should be translated on a regular basis through a to-be-developed process. MINT remains limited in its ability to fully

engage all members as long as all members are expected to read and interact in English regardless of the depth of their familiarity and comfort with the language. While acknowledging the efforts so far made by many to translate key materials, I would like to see this bumped up the scale of importance within MINT. Overall, I think the future of MINT can be promoted by continuing the central initiatives and events (centralized website, forum, board leadership, trainer certification, etc.) while increasing support for decentralized initiatives (regional events and implementation/training projects, web presence, translational efforts, etc.).

More generally, I would like to see the implicit model guiding MINT operations to be flatter – the MINT board obviously is legally responsible for decisions made within MINT, and some things are probably best discussed and decided within a closed leadership group, but to the extent possible I would suggest exploring ways to de-hierarchize and decentralize not only MINT initiatives but also MINT discussion/deliberation and decision-making. Whenever feasible, I would like to see the board consider taking a role of a guidance/review/confirmatory body rather than a primary deliberative body that invites input toward decisions but with relatively less involvement in decision-making. Again, I am aware that this is happening already to some extent, but I would like to see it expanded in order to increase member involvement and diversify decision-making processes. While some MINT committees are perhaps better conceived as task forces dedicated to achieving or maintaining some initiative, other committees can be more deliberative and development-focused. In forming committees, those focused on deliberation and development, in my opinion, could be more formally granted wide latitude to consider and decide issues with board guidance and oversight, rather than serve a function of developing issues for input to board deliberation. Again, I am aware of cases in which this is already happening, but I would like to see it more widespread.

Relatedly, I would put more issues of importance to the MINT network out for member comment, input and decision-making. At present, members are often invited to provide input on issues under consideration, but often after initial discussions have been had and tentative decisions reached, and then often also in a passive format (minutes of board meetings published for comment across the range of issues discussed rather than active solicitation of member input on issues to be considered and upcoming for consideration). Anticipated board agenda items could be presented weeks prior to formal consideration (when possible), a timeline for input opened, and perhaps even anonymous input considered. A board member could directly interact with members via the eForum on issues of importance (perhaps the chair or vice-chair). Members should also have a readily accessible option for petitioning for issues to be deliberated, and input and at times voting should be actively invited/facilitated across issues. Recognizing that some sensitive matters may be best considered in private, I would have the board consider ways to attempt to make as much discussion “public” (member-wide) as possible.

Membership engagement can also be enhanced by committees having their own interaction eForums and expectations for regularly engaging the larger body of members in their own considerations and deliberations. Committee eForums were developed for the current website and are there in waiting for use if desired.

I believe that over time, intentionally decentralizing MINT development and decision-making in a careful way, combined with supporting strong regional groups, could considerably strengthen MINT as it continues to grow beyond the size able to be reliably managed through a small group of volunteer board members and a few paid staff. Once again, none of this is meant to diminish any current MINT activities or processes, but my general sense is that change/progress comes in waves and that the time is right for this kind of wave to happen.

Streamlining/development of e-presence to support greater member engagement: I’ll be brief with this. MINT is entering into a significant period of development of our distance/electronic communications/relationships. I’m actively involved in helping develop new web platform/portal

and hope to support MINT more thoroughly integrating new developments such as live streamed events, conference/membership apps, and more readily accessible means of communication. This is easier said than done, particularly on a limited budget, but any means possible should be taken to make member communications as accessible and streamlined as possible

B. Global inclusion – outward facing

I don't want to offer a lot of platitudes here. This is important, and related to my comments above, I think rather than focusing on developing strong centralized efforts, we may be better off to encourage this primarily through regional/language efforts to reach out, offer support and service, and coach/mentor people who can continue the process. I confess some confusion as to the various MINT groups doing this – the international advisory committee, the MI across cultures group, and I think one other? While perhaps I should have done my homework before commenting, I doubt that I am much different than many MINT members who are vaguely aware of these different start up possibilities and the progress they have been making. One way we might assist is to invite committees/groups to provide quarterly updates that could be distributed across MINT.

I would like to see the website transformed to include a kind of online magazine aspect, containing more or less the equivalent of the old newsletter and e-journal articles, opinion pieces, and features. E-development is ongoing now under the guidance of a few current board members, and I will be happy to support those efforts.

C. Guidance/standards/resources for the world

We have some important resources already on the website. They are currently somewhat haphazardly organized, with holes, and largely in English. Perhaps we could start there, cleaning up/updating and translating.

Honestly, I think we should remain humble about the guidance/standards part of this pillar if I understand it correctly, as while I do think there is a core to MI, I also think we still know relatively little about what MI actually is or how it works, how to best train people in it, and how it might translate and transfer across cultures, particularly as MI continues to move outside of European-heritage cultures. It is important that we readily communicate current understandings of theory and research, while maintaining a long view of where it's at in regard to development and validation aspects, and always be careful about overgeneralizing or becoming overconfident about what we think we know. I also think it is important that we be careful about protecting against establishing an orthodoxy of opinions about MI practice, training and implementation, as it is all too easy to get swept up in current thinking, become passionate, and then close off to unexplored possibilities. MI is best served, I think, by retaining a dispassionate scientific attitude about what it is, how it works, and the reach and limits of its value in helping promote positive change.

Again, given the limitations of time and priorities, I would try to structurally support this pillar substantially through regional/language groups who are encouraged, supported and funded to offer initiatives toward this end. I would probably seek to support advancement of MI practice at core/deep levels that retain the fundamental aspects of MI while more intentionally supporting adaptation to various cultures, languages, and settings. And I don't have any firm idea what the details would be at this point.

One thing I do know, related to both pillars 2 & 3, is that we have had some success with the International Conference on MI in incorporating some perspectives and voices otherwise not a part of MINT, and I think that continued effort to crosswalk MI training with research, administration, policy-making, and program development and evaluation efforts could produce greater resources than we are likely to accomplish through MINT forums alone, and I would like to see ways to extend

this intermingling of professional communities with overlapping interests in MI, but who normally move in different circles. Whether that means combined events, or a rethinking from the core of what kinds of events and initiatives we want to have, I do think we should be careful about becoming too internally focused on MINT, on MI stand-alone training, and should continue to challenge ourselves to take in other perspectives and network with people who are likely never to be members of MINT, or likely even interested in becoming members, but who nevertheless have interest in MI.

4. Here are the current members of the Board :

- a. Hilde Jans (chair)**
- b. Tim Godden (vice-chair)**
- c. Karen Ingersoll (treasurer)**
- d. Terri Moyers (secretary)**
- e. Majella Greene (member at large)**
- f. Colleen Marshall (member at large)**
- g. Helen Mentha (member at large)**

Please explain how you might contribute to the diversity of the Board.

This is a bit of a paradox for me. As a middle-aged North American white man, I can't contribute much to the diversity of the Board through my heritage. My professional roles as trainer, practitioner and sometime-researcher also are not particularly unique, although my experience using MI as a core element of a graduate counselor training program for some years now does provide I think a good complement to perspectives that may be derived primarily from community and agency-based training efforts as well as controlled research studies.

More broadly, I've travelled and trained in many places and cultures and am always impressed to learn of the subtle variations in MI from culture to culture, place to place, profession to profession. From that, I am interested in promoting diversity within MINT and throughout the larger MI community. If the ideas about promoting regional groups are seen through, I think this will serve the end of increasing and promoting diversity. One area of diversity I would like us to pay increased attention to is serving the needs of underprivileged communities who can easily fall to last position on the list of priorities because not only can they often not pay for training services, the systems of care are often so fractured or underdeveloped that there is not even access to helping services in general for members of many communities. While I support volunteer efforts to attend to these communities, I think MINT is well-positioned to organize events that contribute to communities in need, sponsoring projects and events that may help directly as well as serve as informal mentoring of local individuals and collaboratives that can extend support beyond what could be brought in from outside. I am aware of these initiatives happening within MINT, such as the recent effort in Cuba, yet would like to see them even more extensively supported and more prominently featured. We also are growing in Asian membership and I want to support and contribute to the continued broadening of MINT beyond North America and Europe. One way to do that is to focus considerable effort on non-English-language translation of MI materials and concepts.

5. Please describe any experiences you have had in serving on other committees or boards, either in a professional or personal capacity that might support your candidacy. Specifically, include dates of involvement, positions held, experience of working as part of a team, challenges of the positions held, successes and frustrations. How have these experiences prepared you for serving on the MINT Board?

Much of my professional life has been centered on MINT. While early in my career, I served on state-level additions boards, since then I have not been interested in serving in leadership roles in other professional organizations, although I have served considerably in my university, on committees ranging from hiring and promotion committees, to standing university committees including

curriculum development and review, faculty senate, university council, etc. In my job, I serve in an administrative role part-time, as the associate chair of my department. My style is friendly and collaborative, but I can sometimes also be strong-minded and insistent, and my hope is to integrate the best of each of these styles to achieve as much as can be achieved in a working group while also keeping the cohesiveness of the group intact, and remembering in the end that it is only work after all and everyone has families to love and lives to live.

- 6. Board work currently consists of both operational tasks (keeping the organization functioning day to day) and strategic tasks (overseeing and planning). Describe your interest in and capacities in both these areas.**

My interest is honestly more in strategic tasks than operational tasks, but both have to be done. My belief is that dreamers who aren't doers don't get much accomplished, and doers who don't dream don't accomplish much that matters.

- 7. The typical Board member spends 5-10 hours per week on MINT Board matters. Please indicate how you will integrate this commitment with your ongoing professional and personal activities.**

I serve in a traditional American university faculty role in which I can largely set my own specific priorities as long as I function across the core areas of teaching, scholarship and service/leadership. I have just completed my participation in several university-level initiatives I have been involved with for the past several years and MINT time would take the place of those.

- 8. Please send a current CV and also provide the contact details (email and telephone number) of two references that we may approach as part your nomination process. These people should be able to provide information about your suitability for this position.**

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