May 22, 2014

To: MINT

From: Terri Moyers, Jen Manuel, and Denise Ernst

Re: Wording differences between MITI 3.1.1 and MI 3

The purpose of this document is to clarify the differences in terminology in MITI 3.1.1 (the most current version) and MI-3 regarding standards of competence and proficiency. These standards are given in the MITI 3.1.1, page 27 and MI-3 on page 400.

The terms *Beginning Proficiency* and *Competency* were first used in the MITI with proficiency designated as the beginning level. In the writing of MI-3, the authors considered that the terms ought to be reversed and used the terms *Basic Competency* and *Proficiency.* By way of explanation Bill says, "I'd rather listen to a proficient pianist than one who is merely competent." This seems sensible, so the SAME TERMINOLOGY WILL NOW BE USED FOR THE MITI, as for MI-3. It is important to note that overall, the thresholds are the same for both global measures and behavior counts. The terms are simply reversed from their previous order in the MITI.

These thresholds are not driven by data but instead drawn from experience and expert opinion. They are provided as GUIDANCE ONLY. As process research continues to appear, you can expect that the thresholds will change based on our knowledge about which elements are important to the desired outcomes, how those elements operate in conversations, and our understanding of what is "good enough" MI. Along these lines, we are currently working on the MITI 4.0 and will set the thresholds based on the most current knowledge. In addition, we will be changing the terminology once again with the hope of further clarification. At this point, we are planning on using *Fair* and *Good* to identify the two levels of skill, thereby avoiding the confusion of the current terms altogether.

One other concern is how the thresholds are used in practice. Please consider the following in evaluating and interpreting the results of coding.

1. Coding is completed on a single sample. The results represent the level of skills demonstrated in that sample, and should not be generalized to the interviewer's entire practice. Any single sample may not adequately reflect a person's overall skill level. Many things influence how well a practitioner can demonstrate skills in a single session, including the nature of the interaction (real play, role play, real client), the mode of delivery (in person, telephonic, in a group), the context of the session (medical setting, part of psychotherapy, intake), and most significantly, the client. Clients frequently determine how the interaction unfolds based on their verbal skills, their level of functioning, their level of participation, and the depth of

their distress over the situation. Therefore, the terms competent and proficient apply only to the person's performance on the sample being evaluated.

2. Generalizing from a single sample to a larger body of work can be accomplished if the correct sampling procedure is used. For example, in clinical trials, which require regular monitoring of a random sample of sessions conducted, investigators want to report that the sessions were delivered, on average, with a certain level of competence. This is to ensure fidelity to the treatment and to allow for comparisons with other studies. It is not the coding that is done differently, but the fact that the sample is obtained randomly, systematically and (ideally) at different time points, that allows generalization.

3. Coding can also be used to evaluate the effects of training and skill development of a practitioner over time. Multiple samples at multiple time points may be used to evaluate whether performance is improving or not. Again, it is the manner in which the samples are obtained that determines the conclusions that can be reached, and not just the results of the coding itself.

4. Perhaps the most confusion about this happens in relation to the coding of work samples submitted by TNT applicants. Applicants are asked to select a sample that best reflects their skills in MI and to submit it along with self-reflection on the sample. The results of coding this single sample (and not a random sample) can only answer this question: "*To what extent is the applicant able to demonstrate the full range of MI skills in this work sample?*" Nothing more. The results are reported to the applicant with the thresholds given in the MITI 3.1.1 because that is the instrument that is used. Because we expect that this might engender some confusion, we will ALSO use the words Fair and Good to describe the samples we rate for TNT applicants.