

The Art of Teaching Motivational Interviewing *A Resource for MI Trainers*

(A 20-year Retrospective of Key Learnings)



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER 1 - BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE MI TRAINER.....	9
EMBRACE THE REALITY: TEACHING MI IS COMPLEX.....	10
OBSERVE AND ASSESS YOURSELF	10
GET COACHING AND FEEDBACK.....	11
OBSERVE OTHER MI TRAINERS	11
OBSERVE OTHER MINTIES TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN STYLE	12
STAY UP-TO-DATE	12
KEEP YOUR MI SKILLS SHARP	12
2 — MI IS ALSO A STYLE FOR TRAINING.....	14
MODEL, MODEL, MODEL: LIVE MI.....	15
GUIDING THE LEARNING IS A PARALLEL PROCESS.....	15
THE WISDOM IS IN THE ROOM	15
TEACH THE MUSIC, TEACH THE HEART	16
3 — THE MI TRAINER’S STYLE	17
SHOW YOU CARE	18
KEEP IT REAL	18
KEEP A STRENGTH-BASED PERSPECTIVE.....	19
HAVE PATIENCE	19
BE FLEXIBLE AND CONSIDERATE	19
BE AVAILABLE	20
LET IT GO TO LEARN AND GROW: OFF DAYS	20
PRACTICE MODESTY	21
MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING IS NOT A LIFESAVER	21
THE TRAINING IS NOT ABOUT THE TRAINER; IT’S ABOUT THE LEARNERS	21
GIVE EVERYTHING YOU HAVE	22
YOUR PASSION IS YOUR GIFT	22
DEMONSTRATE YOUR PRESENCE.....	22
YOU, THE TRAINER, ARE THE MOST POWERFUL VISUAL AID.....	22
INTEGRATE MINDFULNESS	24
BEGIN THE TRAINING IN A STATE OF MINDFULNESS.....	24
MINDFULNESS BENEFITS THE TRAINER	25
MINDFUL MOMENTS FOR TRAINEES	25

SAY WHAT IS SO	25
MAINTAIN TRANSPARENCY THROUGHOUT THE LEARNING PROCESS	26
EXPECT AND RESPECT THE UNEXPECTED.....	27

4 — STRATEGIES FOR GUIDING THE LEARNING OF MI 30

BE CREATIVE	31
SPECIAL POWERS NOT REQUIRED.....	31
KEEP IT NEW	32
BRING LEVITY INTO THE LEARNING.....	32
MAKE IT MULTI-MODAL, MULTI-SENSORY, WHOLE-BRAINED	33
INCORPORATE METAPHOR	33
THE DANCE OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING.....	33
KEEP THE LEARNING MOVING	34
POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT.....	34
RECEPTIVE OVER THE RATIONAL: GET YOUR LEARNERS OUT OF THEIR HEADS	34
ROLLING RIGHT ALONG	35
PRACTICE THE ART OF SIMPLICITY	35
“MAKE EVERYTHING AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT SIMPLER.”	35
DECREASE CONTENT, INCREASE INVOLVEMENT.....	36
KEEP THE FOCUS ON THE LEARNERS.....	36
ESTABLISH RHYTHM AND FLOW	38
CHOREOGRAPH A DYNAMIC TRAINING PLAN	38
RESPOND TO CUES.....	38
INCORPORATE RITUAL TO SUPPORT RHYTHM AND FLOW.....	38
BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR AGENDA TO SUPPORT RHYTHM AND FLOW	39
PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS TO RE-ESTABLISH RHYTHM	39
SEQUENCE LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT RHYTHM AND FLOW	39
INTEGRATE DEBRIEFING INTO ACTIVITY	41
APPROPRIATE SCAFFOLDING HELPS LEARNERS TO STAY THE COURSE.....	41
FIT BREAKS INTO THE TRAINING PLAN	42
TAKE BRIEF MOVEMENT BREAKS TO RE-CHARGE.....	44
TRANSITION WITH INTENTION	44
GOLDEN MOMENTS.....	44
MAKE TIME FOR REFLECTION AND CONSOLIDATION.....	46
INCLUDE A CONSOLIDATION ACTIVITY	46
INTERSPERSE DRILLS THROUGHOUT TRAINING.....	48
DRILLS FOR GETTING TO THE GESTALT.....	49
DRILLS FOR PICKING UP THE PACE	49
COACHING PARTICIPANTS THROUGH DRILLS	49
MAKE OBSERVATIONS AN ACTIVE PRACTICE.....	49
INCORPORATE WRITTEN OR KINESTHETIC ELEMENTS IN OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES.....	50
USE KINESTHETIC STRATEGIES TO ACTIVATE INTERNALIZATION	50
USING MI SIGN LANGUAGE ALLOWS LEARNERS TO BE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THEIR OBSERVATIONS.....	50
INCORPORATE LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS	51
EXECUTE DEMONSTRATIONS WITH CARE	51
SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS.....	52

A SPONTANEOUS DEMO IS A RISK WORTH TAKING.....	53
PROVIDE FEEDBACK EARLY AND OFTEN	53
WORK IN FEEDBACK FROM THE GET-GO.....	54
PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO DYADS AND SMALL-GROUPS.....	54
MOVE FROM POSITIVE TOWARDS CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK.....	55
PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNERS TO PRACTICE GIVING FEEDBACK.....	56
KINESTHETIC FEEDBACK	57
TELL STORIES ABOUT YOUR MI EXPERIENCES.....	58
DEVELOP A REPERTOIRE OF YOUR OWN MI STORIES	58
THE CLIFFHANGER	59
ALLOW AMPLE TIME TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS	63
DESIGNATE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER TIME	64
ANSWER QUESTIONS PERTINENT TO CURRENT TOPIC	64
ACKNOWLEDGE BURNING QUESTIONS	64
ELICIT GROUP RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS	65
BE PREPARED FOR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND COMMON CONCERNS.....	65
FIND WAYS TO WORK WITH THE CHALLENGING LEARNER.....	65
RESISTANCE TO REAL- OR ROLE-PLAY PRACTICE.....	65
SHY LEARNERS	66
TALKATIVE LEARNERS	66
CLIQUES.....	66
<u>5 — PREPARING FOR A TRAINING EVENT</u>	<u>67</u>
FOCUS ON OUTCOMES	68
OUTCOMES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	68
OUTCOMES FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	68
EMBRACE SHORT EVENTS.....	69
KNOW YOUR LEARNERS	70
DEVELOP A SEQUENCING FRAMEWORK	72
INVEST THE TIME	72
DESIGN A BROAD-BASED TRAINING STRUCTURE	72
REPETITIVE SEQUENCING	72
START AND END WITH THE BIG PICTURE	73
SEQUENCING ALGORITHMS	73
WORK WITH A CO-TRAINER.....	75
JOINT FACILITATION	75
GET ORGANIZED.....	76
BE PREPARED.....	76
CREATE A LIST OF TRAINING AND TRAVEL SUPPLIES	77
ORGANIZE YOUR COMPUTER FILES.....	77
PREPARE HANDOUT PACKETS.....	78
KEEP PREPARING UNTIL TAKE-OFF.....	82
<u>6 — DESIGNING & ENRICHING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.....</u>	<u>83</u>

SET UP THE ROOM TO SUPPORT LEARNING	84
SEATING.....	84
TRAINER TABLES AND STOOL	84
TRAINER VISIBILITY	84
CREATE FOCUS HUBS.....	85
MI ALTAR	86
USE VISUALS	87
MI MESSAGES	87
PROJECT QUOTATIONS DURING BREAKS.....	88
DISPLAY ASSESSMENT CHARTS.....	88
SET UP A BIKE RACK CHART PAD.....	88
USE NAME PLATES TO CONNECT WITH LEARNERS	88
PLAY MUSIC	89
CHOOSE MUSIC TO FIT THE GROUP	90

7 — OPENING THE TRAINING **91**

KNOW YOUR OPENING LINES	92
DELIVER A MULTI-MODAL OPENING SEQUENCE	92
BRIEF PRESENTATION	93
PRESENT AGENDA.....	93
SHARE DESIRED OUTCOMES	93
PROVIDE GROUP GUIDELINES	93
ASSESS LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE AND COMFORT	94
INTRODUCE KINESTHETIC LINKS.....	94
BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE: WHAT WORKS? WHAT DOESN'T?.....	95
TELL CLIFFHANGER STORY	95
CONDUCT A GROUP INTERVIEW.....	95
BRIEF PRESENTATION	96
INITIATE REAL REAL-PLAY (PART 1)	96
EMPHASIZE CHOICE TO ESTABLISH TRUST AND SAFETY	96
CONTINUE REAL REAL-PLAY (PART 2)	96
WAIT ON INTRODUCTIONS	97
GUIDE THE INTRODUCTIONS	97

8 — CLOSING THE TRAINING **99**

END WITH A LONG RIDE.....	100
INCLUDE A FINAL REAL-PLAY ACTIVITY	100
HAND OUT COURSE EVALUATIONS.....	100
INTEGRATE A “WORKING BREAK”	100
SET UP A CONSOLIDATION ACTIVITY.....	100
REVIEW CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENTS.....	101
CONCLUDE CLIFFHANGER STORY	101
EXTEND GRATITUDE, VOICE CONFIDENCE	101
FINAL ACT	101

9 — POST-TRAINING REFLECTION	102
TAKE TIME TO REFLECT, REVIEW, CLEAN UP, DEBRIEF	103
BUILD IN SELF-CARE	104
REST BEFORE REVIEWING FEEDBACK	104
EMBRACE LEARNERS' FEEDBACK.....	104
IN CONCLUSION... ..	105
DEVELOP YOUR OWN UNIQUE STYLE	105
TO TEACH THE ART OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING IS TO TEACH THE ART OF HELPFULNESS	105
APPENDICES.....	106
REFERENCES.....	131

Introduction

"If we as MINTies genuinely give more than we take, a cherished principle from the onset, then it's worth it."

Stephen Rollnick

It all started in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the fall of 1994. There and then I was introduced to the art of helping people learn motivational interviewing (MI) from Bill Miller and Steve Rollnick. Since then, I've devoted a significant part of my career to guiding the learning of MI as a trainer, coach, and consultant. I've facilitated hundreds of training workshops for a variety of audiences, in a variety of venues, both in the US and internationally.

Much about the art of MI training has evolved during the course of the two decades that I've been a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT). In the early days, we'd gather in exotic locales and sit around swimming pools discussing and debating how to effectively teach MI. Now there are forums held in cities throughout the world, attended by hundreds of MINTies who can choose from myriad workshops.

While the venues have changed to accommodate the growing ranks, what has never changed is the spirit of generosity between members. Ideas, experiences, exercises, slides, videos, and reflections are freely shared. This guide is an extension of that sharing. Much of what I include is derived from my own experiences, but a great deal comes from what I've learned from fellow MINTies.

My deep desire is to ignite and advance the learning of MI. My core belief is that this goal is best accomplished when the trainer strategically utilizes an array of best teaching practices to plan and facilitate MI training workshops that are engaging, dynamic, interactive, motivating, confidence-building, enduring and *enjoyable*. The emphasis of this guide is not so much on what specific *content* should be included in MI trainings, but on the *process* of teaching MI. And while potentially applicable to a variety of learning formats, the key learnings I share here are specific to teaching MI in group settings, such as workshops and conferences. Though it is, as Bill points out, "just the beginning of learning complex skills," the workshop format continues to offer, what he likens to "music theory for musicians, or the preliminary ground school for airline pilots."

As we continue to discover what ingredients work best to support the learning of MI, one thing remains clear: there is no one right way to teach MI. These pages are a reflection of *one* trainer's personality, style, and philosophy. My hope is that this document will serve as a resource for supporting other trainers in discovering, embracing, and refining their own styles. And I hope others will share their key learnings. I envision this guide as a living document, expanding with unique contributions from fellow MINTies.

If a guide is someone who encourages and supports others on a journey and "MI is making known what you know," then I prefer to consider the process of teaching MI as *guiding the learning*. And just as it takes time to gain proficiency in MI, you will become an effective guide over time, with practice, feedback, coaching, and a commitment to self-improvement. This, too, is an ongoing journey, with both challenges and rewards. Bon voyage.

Chapter 1 - Becoming An Effective MI Trainer

"We learn something by doing it. There is no other way."

John Holt



Key Learnings

Teaching MI is complex.
Observe and assess yourself.
Get coaching and feedback.
Observe other MI trainers.
Stay up to date.
Keep your MI skills sharp.

Becoming an effective practitioner of MI is an ongoing journey. So it is with becoming an effective trainer of MI. Along the way, as you practice and study and learn by trial and error, you'll gradually discover and develop your own training style.



EMBRACE THE REALITY: TEACHING MI IS COMPLEX

MI is *simple*, but *not easy*. While on the surface, MI appears basic, at its core, *it's a nuanced, multi-layered, strategic, sophisticated art form* and as such, the approach to teaching it requires more than a set of slides, copious lecture notes, standard activities and enthusiasm. Each group is different and each day is different. The MI trainer has to respond to the complex nature of both the subject and the learners, integrating *learner-centered* and *guiding/directive* approaches with:

- ◆ Deftness
- ◆ Flexibility
- ◆ Presence
- ◆ Intuition
- ◆ Skill
- ◆ Strategy
- ◆ Heart



OBSERVE AND ASSESS YOURSELF

Watching video recordings of yourself facilitating an MI training provides a unique opportunity to study and learn from your weaknesses, ultimately allowing you to become a more confident, effective trainer.

It's not always comfortable. The camera does not lie! It's important to manage your inner-critic and not beat yourself up. Instead, focus on *strengths* and areas of *potential growth and improvement*.

Formalize observations of yourself by using a trainer coding and assessment tool. I originally developed a tool for myself that I call the MITA: Motivational Interviewing Trainer Assessment (See **Appendix A**). Consider using the MITA for recording, analyzing, and evaluating all aspects—or specific parts—of your presentation. Similar to the MITI (Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity), the MITA is broken into the following sections:

- ◆ Global ratings of guiding principles
- ◆ Facilitation style
- ◆ Behavior counts
- ◆ Multi-modal learning approaches



GET COACHING AND FEEDBACK

Invite an experienced MINTie to observe you facilitating an MI training workshop. This could be as *an in-person observation* or *a review of a video recording* of at least part of training session you conduct.

Encourage your MINTie coach to take notes specific to your *strengths* and *areas of improvement*. The coach may find it helpful to code your overall training style and behaviors using the tool discussed above, under Self-Observation and Assessment, and included in **Appendix A**. Allow ample time for your coach to share honest feedback and to discuss your key learnings and ideas for future improvement.



OBSERVE OTHER MI TRAINERS

We have a host of incredible trainers in the MINT world. When possible, observe some of these trainers in action. Here are some useful opportunities:

- ⇒ Attend a MINT Forum.
- ⇒ Participate. Try to make special arrangements with a specific MINT trainer to attend one of his or her events as an actual participant.
- ⇒ Assist. Ask a MINTie if you may take part in a training, observing from the vantage of a trainer and/or assistant.

Assistants

In recent years, I have made it a practice to invite other MINTies to attend my public training events as assistants. In this role, their primary responsibility is to observe the training workshop from the eyes of a trainer, take copious notes, and quiz me about the training and my process during breaks. I hear time and time again how unusual, refreshing, and incredibly valuable the role of observer/witness is in gathering new training ideas.

Observe Other MINTies to Develop Your Own Style

There's certainly more than one right way to teach MI, and one of the keys to becoming an effective MI trainer is **developing and embracing your own style**. Observing other MINTies train can expand your awareness of the many approaches to teaching MI. This can help in the important process of finding the training style that is most in alignment with *your* personality, unique gifts and talents, and primary contexts that you train in.



STAY UP-TO-DATE

MI keeps evolving, as demonstrated by the third edition (2013) of Miller and Rollnick's *Motivational Interviewing*. Be conscientious, devoting regular time to stay current with on-going MI developments. Be a passionate, consummate MI learner.

- ⇒ Attend MI Forums and other MI-related events.
- ⇒ Track the literature. Read the new books and current articles.
- ⇒ Watch MI-related DVDs and YouTube clips.
- ⇒ Follow the E-Forum. This resource is invaluable. Make it a habit to troll the postings for training ideas and inspirations.

File New Ideas

Many of my best ideas have come from the wisdom and experience of our cadre of talented MI trainers. When I find a post on the E-Forum that interests me, I immediately copy it and place it in a **New Ideas Folder** for future review.



KEEP YOUR MI SKILLS SHARP

Whether you're currently applying MI in a clinical practice or a non-clinical setting, keep evolving in your own MI proficiency. Continue to *self-assess* as well as *elicit feedback from a coach*. At a minimum, periodically ask a fellow MINTie to assess your MI skills by *MITI coding an audio-recorded session* of your MI practice.

MI Proficiency:

- ◆ Supports your credibility as a trainer
- ◆ Allows you to use MI as a primary communication style in interacting with learners
- ◆ Opens the door for you to demonstrate MI in role- or real-plays
- ◆ Provides the option for you to share your own MI experiences

The MINT Philosophy of Generosity

"For it is in giving that we receive."

Francis of Assisi

Generosity is one of the four foundational values of MINT: "Non-possessiveness, sharing, acknowledgment, collaboration, cooperation, giving more than you receive." From the beginning, Bill and Steve have demonstrated extraordinary generosity, making MI freely available to everyone. The diverse members who make up MINT continue this tradition, sharing their experiences and ideas in a variety of ways. Recent examples include Jacque Elder posting a number of MI encounters on YouTube, Vaughn Keller sharing "free stuff" on his website, Bill Matulich freely sharing his E-Book, and Jeff Allison making the Chicago Interviews available as a free download.

2 – MI Is Also A Style For Training

"Teaching motivational interviewing is like doing it."

Miller and Rollnick



Key Learnings

Model, model, model: live MI.
The wisdom is in the room.
Teach the music, teach the heart.

The title of this chapter—"MI Is Also a Style for Training"—is the key learning of key learnings when it comes to guiding the learning of MI. As you'll see throughout this guide, one of the beauties of MI is its applicability to teaching the method. The trainer engages in a *parallel process*, simultaneously **guiding the learning of MI** while **modeling MI**.



MODEL, MODEL, MODEL: LIVE MI

"Modeling may not be the best way to teach; it may be the only way to teach."

Albert Schweitzer

Guiding the Learning is a Parallel Process

Modeling MI is essential to effectively teaching MI. In contrast to *demonstrating* MI, *modeling* MI is not episodic. You don't turn modeling on and off. Modeling MI is constantly happening, at all points during the learning process, from the moment you step in the learning space, through breaks and informal interactions with learners, to the moment the last learner departs. *In the end, modeling is what holds the training together.*

It's a joy for the trainer when a participant has an "aha" moment and says, "Oh, I get it! You've been using motivational interviewing with us."

The Wisdom Is in the Room

Here are some ways to incorporate MI principles throughout your training:

- ⇒ Use the Elicit-Provide-Elicit strategy to evoke learners' own wisdom and insights, goals, commitments and motivations.
- ⇒ Prioritize engagement and relationship at the beginning of the training.
- ⇒ Suspend the expert-didactic-prescriptive-authority role. Instead of disseminating information in lecture style, design training sessions that invite active participation from learners.
- ⇒ Use OARS as the primary communication and facilitation vehicle. In particular, practice reflective listening throughout the training.
- ⇒ Be attuned to change talk. Selectively elicit and reinforce learners' motivation to learn MI.

Example: Integrating Elicit-Provide-Elicit in Feedback**Elicit**

After observing a learner in a real-play activity, I might ask the *open-ended question*:
What, if anything, would you do differently if you could do that interview over again?

Provide

After *listening*, I would then ask permission to share some constructive feedback.

Elicit

I may then conclude by asking another *open-ended question*:
What do think about my feedback? or What are your key learnings from our conversation?



TEACH THE MUSIC, TEACH THE HEART

"What comes from the heart, goes to the heart."
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Modeling MI not only helps to establish your credibility as a trainer, it underscores the essence of motivational interviewing, which is that it is a *way of being*.

In my early years of training, I assumed that the underlying spirit and interpersonal style of MI would naturally come to the surface in the context of practicing and learning the technique. But too often I would encounter post-training learners who had a conceptual understanding of MI and could adequately demonstrate some of the skills and strategies, but were disconnected from the heart and soul of MI, or, as Bill and Steve say, "the words without the music."

Elicit-provide-elicited, decisional balance, scaling questions, agenda setting, reflective listening, evocative questions—we have our many techniques, but MI is ultimately defined by the *spirit* of the practitioner, and this includes the trainer. *Teaching the spirit of MI requires embodying a person-centered attitude, manner, tone, and presence*. When the trainer keeps the heart of MI front and center, the techniques are employed with grace, flow, and authenticity and are ultimately easier to for the learner to grasp.

Show the Spectrum: No Heart to Big Heart

Collect video recordings of clinical encounters showing a variety of interpersonal styles and embodiments of the MI spirit, spanning the spectrum from no heart to big heart. Intersperse these MI encounters during the workshop, such as at the transition before practice activities. Learners can then assess these encounters, discussing how a given clinician's style and spirit influence the overall feel of the interview.

3 – The MI Trainer 's Style

"If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn."

Charlie Parker



Key Learnings

Show you care.

Keep it REAL.

Keep a strength-based perspective.

Have patience.

Be flexible and considerate.

Be available.

Let it go.

Practice modesty.

Give everything you have.

Demonstrate your presence.

Integrate mindfulness.

Say what is so.

Expect and respect the unexpected.

While every trainer will have his or her own unique facilitation style, your demeanor can affect how well your trainees respond to the material at hand. You can see that many principles of motivational interviewing translate into guidelines for training people in the art of MI.



SHOW YOU CARE

Embody an interpersonal style that is friendly, empathic, compassionate, and positive and reflects that you genuinely care for those you serve.



KEEP IT REAL

The MI practitioner who steps down from the expert, authoritarian position and *speaks in the client's language*; who is sincere, genuine, down-to-earth—a *real human being*; who speaks the truth, being honest, for example, about his or her own aspirations for change, is one who establishes a *collaborative partnership* with clients.

Similarly, the genuine, down-to-earth, plain-spoken MI trainer is more likely to have a learning group that is engaged and fully participating.

Authenticity is Essential for Engagement

I call this concept, which I often introduce at the beginning of workshops, getting REAL.

Get REAL

RESPECT. Honoring the *humanity* of every client. Honoring the *capacity for change* in every client. Honoring every client's *autonomy, self-determination, and freedom* to make his or her own choices.

EMPATHY. Clients are more likely to make change if they feel understood.

ACTIVE COLLABORATION. The MI practitioner recognizes that clients are experts on themselves and actively *partners* with them to call forth their *own* strengths, resources, and motivations for change.

LISTENING. Reflective listening is the essential communication skill that enables the practitioner to get REAL, to extend respect, have empathy, and collaborate actively.

The MI trainer gets REAL with learners, making the learning real by:

- ◆ Telling real stories
- ◆ Using real examples
- ◆ Working with real case scenarios
- ◆ Using recordings or transcripts from real interactions
- ◆ Inviting participation in real-play activities
- ◆ Employing activities that address real challenges learners face in their daily practices



KEEP A STRENGTH-BASED PERSPECTIVE

Recognize that all learners are naturally creative and resourceful. All of your learners carry within themselves the core ingredients of MI. **Your primary task is to call forth this potential.**



HAVE PATIENCE

"Rivers know this: there is no hurry. We shall get there some day."
A. A. Milne, *Winnie the Pooh*

While this guide discusses ways to keep your participants engaged in the process of learning MI, it's important to remember that people learn at their own pace, which can be quite gradual. Further, accept the reality that there will always be a few learners who never quite get it.



BE FLEXIBLE AND CONSIDERATE

Effective trainers will design their sessions to accommodate a variety of learning styles. They also try to tailor the training to the particular audience and their needs. Even so, you will need to accept when learners express ambivalence, disagreement and preference for other approaches.



BE AVAILABLE

Keep in mind MINT's Philosophy of Generosity.

- ◆ Make slides and handout materials available to learners electronically.
- ◆ Provide a way for learners to get in touch with you for post-training correspondence or consultation.
- ◆ Be available to learners during breaks and before and after workshops. My message is always: *If you see me during breaks, I'm available for questions, comments, or concerns.*



LET IT GO TO LEARN AND GROW: OFF DAYS

*"Let it go, let it go.
And I'll rise like the break of dawn."*
Inida Menzel, "Let It Go" from the movie *Frozen*

Teaching MI can be humbling. There will be the occasional learner who needs to project something onto you. This learner may challenge you in front of the group or leave you with an unflattering evaluation. There will also be times when you're not on your game. Some days you'll just want to rush home and curl up in bed, convinced that you don't have what it takes to teach MI.

These are the times to access your inner voice that offers resiliency, the voice that gives you a break on off-days, shakes the feeling of inadequacy, and guides you into your bed knowing you did your best. This is the voice that is there in the morning, letting you know that yesterday was an opportunity from which to learn and grow.



PRACTICE MODESTY

"Modesty is the color of virtue."

Diogenes

Motivational Interviewing Is Not a Lifesaver

Motivational interviewing offers a practical, common sense style of communication that has the potential to increase the probability of clients to make and sustain change. MI is simply what it is: a communication and counseling approach, nothing more, nothing less.

Curb Your Enthusiasm

"My goal in training is not to create monsters in the orthodoxy of MI, but to help workers in very difficult fields to face problems otherwise hard to be addressed, using some of the tools MI suggests, where and when they seem to be useful."

Gian Paolo Guelfi, MINTie

Having gone through a period of excessive enthusiasm in touting the benefits of MI, I've fortunately come back to earth and have learned to present MI in a more measured and modest manner. Now, at the start of training events, I offer an MI disclaimer, emphasizing that MI is not a panacea, nor is it magic, nor gospel: *I'm certainly not here to tell you that that MI is the best, right, or only way of guiding folks towards change.*

The Training Is Not About The Trainer; It's About The Learners

"I am here to be an effective trainer, not to be adored.... My behavior does influence the learning of the group, but I only have control over my behavior, not theirs."

Ray Gingerich, MINTie

Our Trainings Are Not As Important As We Might Think They Are

We are simply offering a service to support practitioners in improving the quality of their everyday practice.

The Trainer Is No Better Than The Learners.

We're not healthier or more evolved. See yourself in every learner, and remember that you're a rascal just like everyone else.

Learners Are Responsible For Their Own Learning

Respect that your learners are responsible for choosing whether or not to participate in the training process and free to choose what—if any—components they will incorporate into their work: *Take what you want and leave the rest.*



GIVE EVERYTHING YOU HAVE

While *excessive* enthusiasm doesn't serve over the long run, if you bring *genuine passion* into the learning environment, your learners will be energized to fully engage in the learning process. So *love what you do*. Be passionate about MI.

Your Passion is Your Gift

Your learners are giving you their most valuable asset, their time. In return, give them everything you have to make the learning experience memorable.

The Passionate Practice

In an article in The British Psychological Society's monthly journal, *The Psychologist*, on a talk given by MINTie Claire Lane, the author said that what she "enjoyed most about Claire's talk" was the illumination of "Claire's passion and enthusiasm for her practice."



DEMONSTRATE YOUR PRESENCE

"We convince by our presence."

Walt Whitman

Angeles Arrien in her book *The Four Fold Way* describes how historically, many indigenous cultures have recognized the capacity of presence, often referred to as "showing up" or "choosing to be present and visible" as an important vehicle for personal power and leadership.

You, The Trainer, Are the Most Powerful Visual Aid

Effective MI trainers inspire learners primarily by their presence, a presence that is:

- ◆ Clear
- ◆ Confident
- ◆ Self-assured, full-hearted, fully visible, and accountable

Below are some aspects of body language to be aware of as you interact with learners.

Facial Expressions

- ⇒ Smile often.
- ⇒ Keep facial expressions consistent and congruent with your message.

Smile, Smile, Smile

Don't underestimate the power of a smile to put people at ease. Learners will notice your smile right away.

Posture

- ⇒ Assume a ready position that allows you to move freely in any direction and supports natural gestures. Continually return to the ready position.
- ⇒ Stand tall with weight on both feet.
- ⇒ Relax your shoulders.
- ⇒ Rest your hands at your sides.

The Ready Position

The ready position conveys confidence. It's your starting position for "dancing" around the room.

Movement

- ⇒ Stay on your feet as much as possible to convey your presence and command of the entire room.
- ⇒ Move with purpose. This will help create visual variety and capture the attention of your audience.
- ⇒ Limit nervous movement. Avoid drifting, shuffling, swaying, rocking, leaning, grinding your heels, dancing the cha-cha.

Gestures

- ⇒ Gesture naturally and freely.
- ⇒ Use gestures to create visual images.
- ⇒ Make your gestures complementary to the words you are speaking and the emotions you wish to convey.
- ⇒ Limit distracting, repetitive gestures.
- ⇒ Avoid: twiddling thumbs; hands in prayer position, pockets or fig leaf position.

Eye Contact

- ⇒ Be generous with eye contact.
- ⇒ Share comfortable eye contact with all learners.
- ⇒ Maintain eye contact for approximately three seconds, or until a sentence or thought is completed.
- ⇒ A shorter length of eye contact may be appropriate when posing a question.
- ⇒ Vary pattern of eye contact.
- ⇒ Respect cultural differences.
- ⇒ Avoid looking above trainees, the slow blink, missing those on the edges, scanning, and darting eyes from person to person ("the sprinkler effect").

Voice

- ⇒ Speak slowly and clearly.
- ⇒ Vary voice volume to emphasize key messages.
- ⇒ Use appropriate tone, pitch and speed.

Pauses

- ⇒ Pause to emphasize important points and to create transitions.
- ⇒ Pause to give yourself time to breathe, relax, and prepare for the next point.
- ⇒ Pause to give learners time to absorb what they are hearing.



INTEGRATE MINDFULNESS

"Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally."

Jon Kabat-Zinn

In recent years, "mindfulness" has emerged as a powerful, evidence-based tool for enhancing psychological health, and for addressing a wide range of clinical disorders. Bill Miller and Steve Rollnick, in the third edition of *Motivational Interviewing*, discuss how mindfulness, or an "uncluttered mind," sets the stage for the inner state required in MI, a state that is "emotionally aware, thoughtful, and responsive."

Begin the Training in a State of Mindfulness

It's helpful to begin the process of bringing mindfulness to the learning environment *before* the start of training. Take time to quiet your inner world.

- ⇒ Try sitting or walking or swimming meditatively.
- ⇒ Consider setting personal intentions for the learning process (such as Keep It Simple).
- ⇒ Internally connect with your interpersonal style and the spirit of MI you wish to embody and model.

Mindfulness Benefits the Trainer

For the trainer, keeping a mindfulness orientation:

- ◆ Fosters a feeling of being grounded, centered, and composed
- ◆ Increases focus, presence, and self-confidence
- ◆ Expands peripheral vision
- ◆ Opens up a greater capacity to deal with the unexpected
- ◆ Increases creativity resulting in an expanded repertoire of responses to learners' needs
- ◆ Increases capacity for more spontaneity and improvisation
- ◆ Allows the essence of MI to come through more naturally and authentically

Mindful Moments for Trainees

For learners, practicing mindfulness will increase their focus and concentration, self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-compassion.

Integrate mindfulness into the flow of the learning experience right from the first few minutes of a workshop and periodically thereafter, at key transitions, for example, immediately before and/or after an activity. Integrate mindful moments through means such as:

- ◆ Sitting in silence
- ◆ Deep breathing
- ◆ Meditation
- ◆ Progressive muscle relaxation
- ◆ Gentle stretching
- ◆ Focused walking



SAY WHAT IS SO

"To have the most satisfying human relations, we must be both aware and honest."
William Schutz

MI learners appreciate the trainer who is candid, clear, aligns words with actions, and tells the truth. Demonstrating transparency holds you, the trainer, *accountable*. Also, when learners know the structure from the beginning, they feel *safer and more in control* of the learning process.

Maintain Transparency Throughout the Learning Process

- ⇒ Right from the beginning articulate the plan, schedule, and objectives for the workshop.
- ⇒ Honor time commitments. For example, if you say you are going to break for lunch by noon, do so.
- ⇒ Explain that the training is based on a *parallel process* involving both *teaching* and *modeling* MI:

I will be guiding the learning process and—at the same time—modeling MI with all of you from the beginning to the end of our time together. So, out of the corner of one eye, pay attention to how I work with you.
- ⇒ Explain what learners are going to be seeing *before* showing video clips or other examples of MI.
- ⇒ As you prepare participants for an activity, clearly explain to them the activity's purpose.
- ⇒ Avoid including hidden agendas in activities. (See box, below.)
- ⇒ Before participants begin an activity, explain the process for providing feedback:

During the activity I will be wandering around the room and may listen to a bit of your interview. At that point, I may stop the conversation and ask if you'd like some feedback. How does that sound?

If you'd like some assistance during the feedback, raise your hand and I'll come to you.
- ⇒ When offering feedback, don't whitewash the truth. Be clear and specific, balancing the identification of strengths with areas to improve.
- ⇒ If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.

Example: The Consequence of Hidden Agendas—The Good and Not-So-Good Role Play

For many years, one of my go-to activities in introductory events was a “good and not-so-good role-play.” While the non-transparent aspect of this activity illustrated how clients can respond to MI-inconsistent approaches, it also occasionally provoked strong feelings in some learners.

This activity would begin with a brainstorming session during which I would list on chart pads, participants' responses to two separate questions:

- ◆ What I currently do that builds and strengthens clients' inner motivation to make change.”
- ◆ What I currently do (or maybe have done in the past) that builds and strengthens clients' resistance to making change.”

Following the role play, learners were invited to find a partner for a brief role-play activity with one partner playing the client and the other, the social worker.

Social Worker Role

Clients were asked to step out the door and read a handout describing their role and then to wait for me to join them. Once the clients were behind the shut door, I would give the social workers their instructions, telling them, *This is going to be a brief, two minute interview during which you are to try as hard as you can to persuade your client to quit smoking and stop*

drinking using all the means we brainstormed that don't work: those things that build and strengthen resistance. I would ask the social workers to not be too obvious at the beginning of the interview about what they were doing. You can be friendly, but very quickly start turning up the heat. Please stay focused in your role for the entire two minutes. Don't lose it. Don't start laughing.

Client Role

After instructing the social workers, I would head out the door and briefly direct the clients: You know your role: do your best to be this person. Don't purposely walk in the room with the intention of giving your social worker a hard time. Please walk in silently, take your seat, and don't start talking until I ring my bell. Respond naturally and appropriately to how they're approaching you.

The Interviews

At this point, clients would enter "the clinic," sit down with their social worker and after I rang a bell, the interview would commence. At the two minute mark I would ring the bell again, stopping the interviews, and invite reactions to the experience.

Benefit of Activity

More often than not, this activity did illustrate what tends not to work. Those in the client role demonstrated resistance (discord and sustain talk) while the interviewers demonstrated how easily their manner, tone, style, and overall approach can positively and negatively influence resistance.

Drawback of Hidden Agenda

Every now and then, however, this activity evoked frustration, and in a few cases, anger, in participants playing the role of the client. They felt tricked. They were anticipating a social worker who would counsel in an MI-consistent manner. Thus, I've stopped using this activity, and have made it a practice to always be transparent and honest about what learners are going to experience in activities.



EXPECT AND RESPECT THE UNEXPECTED

"The unexpected is our normal routine."

Commander Riker, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*

The art of teaching MI involves navigating the flow of many moving parts. You must make minute-to-minute adjustments to the training plan as you track the energy level of your learners and respond to their needs and questions. Over time you will come to anticipate what your learners might present to you. But sometimes you'll be challenged with the unexpected.

To maintain composure, it helps to remind yourself to expect—and respect—the unexpected. As horse trainer Monty Roberts says, “Bucking happens; it’s to be expected.”

Using MI to Maintain Composure: Steve on Skid Row

We began this chapter discussing the importance of embracing an interpersonal style that is friendly, compassionate, and positive and reflects that you genuinely care for those you serve, qualities embedded in the core of MI. I have a story I sometimes tell learners that demonstrate how we can draw on MI to deal with unexpected challenges with grace.

I was invited to facilitate a two-day introductory MI training for a group of Street Counselors serving the homeless population on skid row in Los Angeles. I arrived at the training location forty-five minutes before the designated start time, made contact with the Training Coordinator, and was immediately escorted to the training room, which turned about to be a long, narrow room with fifty or so folding metal chairs arranged in eight or nine rows. On one long wall was a series of vending machines with loud motors that turned on and off randomly. The other side of the room was floor to ceiling, wall to wall windows looking directly out onto a street notorious for drug dealing and prostitution.

Promptly at 8:30 a.m., the learners filed into the room en masse. My first thought was that this was going to be my first opportunity to work exclusively with a group of all men, and all men of color.

Once everyone was seated, the Training Coordinator welcomed the audience, introduced me, told the group to pay attention because they had a lot to learn, and then immediately left. I stood in front of the group and let everyone know that I was honored to be in their presence and to have the chance to introduce them to a practical, common sense, evidence-based... Before I could say anything more a man sitting in the back row stood up authoritatively and raised his hand. I’ll never forget that moment. This gentleman was striking, very tall, muscular, and dressed in baby blue from head to toe: baby blue basketball shoes, baby blue sweat suit, baby blue leather baseball hat. Everything was baby blue, except for a gold-colored letter Z on his hat.

I stopped my introduction. “Yes?” I said. He dropped his arms, took a step forward, and with the whole room turning in his direction, boomed, “My name is “Z.” So, what does some white-ass punk from Frisco know about working with brothers on the streets of Los Angeles?” At that moment you could hear a pin drop. The entire room turned in unison to face me.

In trainings, we often talk about how to respond when you ask permission to broach a topic or exchange information and the client says, No. This was one of those times. With my heart pounding, I took a deep breath and mustered a response. “Z, thank you. Thank you so much for speaking up and saying what others in the room are perhaps thinking too.”

“So, what do you know?” asked Z.

I told him, “Z, this is my first time on skid row in LA. This is new to me, and I clearly have a lot to learn from all of you. In terms of what I may offer you, for the past twelve years I’ve been introducing motivational interviewing to help professionals who talk to people about making change in their lives, and if you’re interested, I would be honored to have a chance to do the same with all of you.”

“Alright,” Z said. “This sounds good. You can hang.” He went on to explain, “We had some white-ass punk come in here a couple months back talking to us like he knew our world better than we know it ourselves.”

“So you’re wanting to make sure I have what it takes to work with y’all and you definitely want these two days to be worth your time?”

Before I finished speaking, Z walked right up to the front of the room where I stood and shook my hand. “I apologize for calling you a white-ass punk. Just so you know, I’ve got your back. And for the rest you, let’s give this fella our full attention.”

When Z returned to his seat I asked the group an important open-ended question: “Before we get started, what about your work here on skid row is most important for me to know about?”

4 – Strategies for Guiding the Learning of MI

"A guide helps you find your way."

Rollnick, Miller, and Butler



Key Learnings

- Be creative.
- Bring levity into the learning.
- Make it multi-modal, multi-sensory, whole-brained.
- Incorporate metaphors.
- Keep the learning moving.
- Practice the art of simplicity.
- Establish rhythm and flow.
- Fit breaks into the training plan.
- Transition with intention.
- Make time for reflection and consolidation.
- Intersperse drills throughout the training.
- Make observations an active practice.
- Use kinesthetic strategies to activate internalization.
- Incorporate live demonstrations.
- Provide feedback early and often.
- Tell stories about your experiences.
- Allow ample time to respond to questions and concerns.
- Find ways to work with the challenging learner.

Teaching MI in group settings is an art form requiring the integration of strategy and skill, heart and intuition. It takes a lot of preparation and a lot of practice.

This chapter offers various strategies and styles you may wish to adopt and adapt as you design your own trainings.



BE CREATIVE

“Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the things you can think up if only you try!”

Dr. Seuss

Guiding others to learn MI becomes more rich and rewarding when the process becomes a creative act. And the opportunities for bringing forward creativity in the learning process are endless.

Special Powers Not Required

Over the years, I’ve been fortunate to co-train with or observe a number of very creative trainers. What they all have in common is not an inherent gift of creativity, but more a *willingness to be creative*. Give yourself permission to be creative with your learners.

Pass It On: An MI Care Package

Out of the blue, I received a creativity care package from fellow MINTie Greg Merrill, after he assisted me with a training. Enclosed were:

- ◆ Mi-related **video clips**, including one of Greg interviewing a homeless client on a street corner
- ◆ A CD containing Greg's favorite mix of **songs** about change, featuring artists from Tupac to Michael Jackson to the Dixie Chicks and the Indigo Girls
- ◆ An **OARS-related arts and crafts exercise**, including a package of 6-inch wooden oars (literally) and a hodgepodge of beads, pearls, sequins, stickers, glitter, brightly colored markers and other "pieces of worthless flotsam." The idea is for participants to create "a visual OARS symbol that represents their interpersonal style. [Participants] work on these throughout the training and take them with them to put wherever they like. Some people who do home visits hang them from their car rearview mirror, others leave them by their phones or on their bulletin board, etc."

Keep It New

You mine the E-Forum and file ideas that interest you for a reason, and that is to *try out* these ideas. Make it a practice in each new training to incorporate at least one new activity included in your “New Ideas” file or to modify a repeat activity.

For sure, not all of these new and modified activities work well, but you never know until you try. File activities that do serve well under “**Keepers.**”



BRING LEVITY INTO THE LEARNING

"The most wasted of all days is one without laughter."
e.e. cummings

Those who come to our trainings to learn MI work hard. Many walk into workshops fatigued, and in need of a break from their daily grind. Interestingly, attending a workshop often becomes the respite they need, an opportunity to step away from daily challenges and gather new perspective, ideas and energy.

Bringing playfulness into the learning environment makes for a dynamic and engaging workshop. Playfulness can be just the elixir to energize the weary learner.

Playfulness is certainly not about telling jokes or being a stand-up comedian. What's usually good enough is simply being human and not taking yourself or MI too seriously. The occasional cartoon, off beat video clip, MI sing-a-long (such as Bill Miller's "6 Pack," which you can find on YouTube, or the YMCA-OARS song, included later in this chapter), or kinesthetic learning exercise are some of the ways I bring levity into the learning.

Leaving Them Laughing

I was facilitating a two-day training for a group of probation officers working in a juvenile correction facility. On the second day the energy was flagging and the officers were raising concerns about whether their “gangsters” would respond to MI. Someone in the audience made a wise-crack about whether MI could be used to “inject motivation” into certain probationers.

Though unscripted, this was the perfect opening for me to change the mood by showing the classic Saturday Night Live clip of Chris Farley as the “Motivational Speaker” hired by parents to straighten out their teenage son and daughter. This hilarious skit loosened everyone up, brought increased focus and energy into the room, and set the stage for a positive end to the training.



MAKE IT MULTI-MODAL, MULTI-SENSORY, WHOLE-BRAINED

One way to let your creativity loose is by bringing many different modes to your training. Spice up your teaching and appeal to different learning styles by using a variety of multi-modal, multi-sensory, whole-brained approaches when guiding the learning of MI.

Here's a list of various modalities to try incorporating into various aspects of your training.

ARTS-BASED

- ◆ Art
- ◆ Dance
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Poetry
- ◆ Rap

MULTI-MEDIA

- ◆ Audio
- ◆ Images
- ◆ Video

SPIRIT-BASED

- ◆ Chant
- ◆ Meditation
- ◆ Ritual
- ◆ Visualization

PLAY--BASED

- ◆ Games
- ◆ Quizzes

MI-PROCESS-BASED

- ◆ Case Studies
- ◆ Coding of Observations
- ◆ Considering Metaphors
- ◆ Demonstration
- ◆ Real-Play
- ◆ Role-Play
- ◆ Simulation

MOVEMENT-BASED

- ◆ Energizers
- ◆ Kinesthetic Signals

TALK-BASED

- ◆ Debate
- ◆ Discussion
- ◆ Humor
- ◆ Mini-Lectures
- ◆ Small-group Brainstorming



INCORPORATE METAPHOR

“The way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor.”

Lakoff and Johnson

Use a variety of metaphors. Find metaphors that you relate to and believe will have meaning for your participants. I tend to draw my metaphors from surfing, painting, skiing, and mountain climbing.

⇒ See **Appendix C** for a listing of metaphors MINTie Mindy Hohman compiled from the Third Edition of Bill Miller and Steve Rollnick’s *Motivational Interviewing*.

The Dance of Motivational Interviewing

“How can we know the dancer from the dance?”

William Butler Yeats

One metaphor that lends itself particularly well as an overarching theme for conveying the essence of MI is that of **the dance**.

MINTie Jeff Allison has suggested making the distinction between **“Dancing versus Wrestling”** when describing MI while MINTie Gary Rose artfully describes **The Dance of MI** in a List-Serve post (see below).

The metaphor of the dance serves throughout a training event:

Sometimes you’re leading the dance, sometimes you’re being led as you gracefully move together in partnership.

Please find a dance partner and decide who is going to listen (follow) and who is going to speak (lead).

When opening the conversation, support your client’s sense of autonomy by clearly defining the dimensions of the dance floor.

Motivational Interviewing: The Dance

Adapted from an MI List-serve posting by Gary Rose.

After indulging in a good breath mint, the first thing the dancer must do is **ask permission**.

“Would you like to dance?”

Next, to be effective, the dancer must **listen and learn** from the partner. The dancer needs to learn how, where, and when to guide and collaborate with the partner. Also, the dancer needs to identify the natural inclinations of the partner. Does s/he turn more naturally to the left, or to the right? Are soft touches to the mid-back sufficient or is more muscle necessary?

Next, the dancer needs to have a plan and vision of where to end up on the dance floor. S/he makes **strategic decisions in the moment** about leading or following to create a give and take, a fluidity to the movements. Dancers know that the best way to get from here to there is not necessarily (and hardly ever) as the crow flies. The dancer knows that they may need to veer right for a bit before they proceed left; that they may need to dance around the middle a bit before moving forward.

And the bottom line—the final criterion of success—is the smoothness of movement of the couple. Surely we are directive. But we do it with STYLE!



KEEP THE LEARNING MOVING

“I have found that if horses are not given time to think negative and you keep rolling right along with their lessons, they will think more positively and advance more rapidly than a horse you wait on too long.”

Monty Roberts

Positive Engagement

When there’s a steady pace and up-beat tempo to the learning experience, learners are more engaged, more focused, more positive, and more likely to absorb the learning.

Conversely, when the rhythm of the training is slow and plodding, learners have more time to become distracted and bored, to socialize, and to entertain their inner critic.

Receptive Over the Rational: Get Your Learners Out of Their Heads

Those who struggle the most to grasp MI tend to be the learners who intellectualize or over-think the concepts, trying to dissect the process into concrete units. But MI is not a rational process! MI is ultimately an *intuitive art*, requiring *deep attunement, subtle finesse, and mindful presence*.

Training that rolls right along diverts learners' attention away from the tendencies to rationalize and toward a more reflective and receptive heart and mind.

Rolling Right Along

Here are some ways you might keep things moving.

- ◆ **Activities.** Set brief time frames for learning activities, especially real- and role-plays.
- ◆ **Lectures.** Make that *mini-lectures*. Keep the doses of information brief. (See "Practice the Art of Simplicity," below.)
- ◆ **Instructions.** Be *clear, brief, and to-the-point* when setting up activities.
- ◆ **Transitions.** Make transitions between activities *fluid*. Incorporate *auditory signals* (such as ringing a bell) to mark key transitions and gain the group's attention.
- ◆ **Questions.** Record off-topic questions on a Bike Rack chart pad for later discussion. (See "Allow Ample Time to Respond to Questions and Concerns," below.)
- ◆ **Comments.** Re-focus learners who speak off-topic or make long-winded comments.

Tools of the Trade: The Kitchen Timer

Keeping activities brief is essential for supporting the steady rhythm and flow of the learning experience. One of the biggest mistakes I've made as a trainer is letting activities run too long so that learners get off track, or step into old habits, or sit around and chat when they've finished. Set—and stick to—short time frames for activities. I set a kitchen timer and when the time is up, I ring a bell to alert learners that it's time to transition.



PRACTICE THE ART OF SIMPLICITY

"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

Leonardo da Vinci

Part of the challenge of teaching the art of MI is to find ways to present the fundamental spirit along with the skills and strategies of MI in a manner that is simple but does not oversimplify MI.

"Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler."

Albert Einstein's remark brings up an important distinction between simplicity and oversimplification.

- ◆ The goal of **simplicity** is to provide learners with the *internal space* to discover *on their own*, and *at their own pace*, the richness and complexity of MI.
- ◆ If we **oversimplify** our teaching, we risk depriving learners of the nuances of MI, *reducing the art to soulless technique*.

Keep things simple, without over-simplifying.

Design Straightforward Activities

- ⇒ Provide and create activities that are structured and straightforward.
- ⇒ Provide clear, succinct directions for all stages of an activity, including set-up, implementation, and debriefing.

Use Economy In Presentations

- ⇒ When presenting MI-specific information, be economical with your words, avoiding technical jargon. (See "Decrease Content, Increase Involvement," below.)
- ⇒ Craft uncluttered slides with as few words as possible.
- ⇒ Make demonstrations brief and to the point.

Respond And Provide Feedback With Concision And Precision

- ⇒ Respond to learner's questions concisely.
- ⇒ Keep your feedback precise and limited to a few important areas of emphasis.
A mantra I repeat during training is: "*Say less, achieve more.*"

Decrease Content, Increase Involvement

When information and content about MI is exchanged, it's optimally done so in **small doses**. According to Carmine Gallo, the author of *Talk Like TED*, "Research shows that speeches exceeding 20 minutes increase the anxiety levels of those listening." For this reason, Gallo tells us, "Whether you're a humble academic or Bono, each TED presenter is given no more than 18 minutes to speak."

In my case, the small doses of information have evolved downward to the range **five minutes or less**. Over the years, my shift has been **away from didactic content and towards active involvement**. Learners are more engaged and have more opportunity to become proficient in MI when they are kept active and given the opportunity to practice, practice, practice.

Keep The Focus On The Learners

You increase the opportunities for participant involvement when you remember that the MI training workshop is *never about you*. It's always *about the learners and motivational interviewing*.

Sage on the Stage versus Guide on the Side

In 1993, Alison King wrote an article for the journal *College Teaching* titled, "From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side." This catchy phrase reminds me to consistently employ MI as I train. It reminds me to talk less, to let go of the expert role, and to invite active, ongoing engagement from the learners.

MI Modeling in Action: Elicit-Provide-Elicit in Real-Play

Remember the idea of the parallel process in which you're guiding and modeling at the same time. The principle of the **guide on the side** who limits the dissemination of information to **small doses** aptly applies to your modeling of MI techniques. Here's a simple example of weaving MI-related information into an activity.

At the beginning of most workshops, I invite learners to warm-up their listening muscles by participating in a brief real-play activity. At the end of the activity, I provide a dose of information followed by an instruction, followed by another dose of information and a final instruction. The activity concludes with a short debrief. The scenario goes something like this:

Dose of Information

Research suggests that MI-learners progress most rapidly when they receive coaching and feedback. People are generally more receptive to feedback when the person offering it respects their self-determination and autonomy. For this reason, an important guideline of motivational interviewing is to ask permission. Ask permission before broaching a topic, before providing information, before offering advice or feedback.

Instruction

Speakers, you have 30 seconds to offer your feedback. Before doing so, ask permission.

Dose of Information

People are generally more likely to consider change when they perceive that the decision to change is ultimately their choice. In addition, people are more likely to actively engage in conversations about change when they are affirmed with sincerity. A simple way to affirm someone is to extend gratitude at the end of a conversation. Thank your speaker, or client, for their willingness to speak to you about something personal.

Instruction

Speakers, it's your choice in how you thank your listener.



ESTABLISH RHYTHM AND FLOW

One of my greatest joys as trainer occurs when there's an obvious rhythm with appropriate ebbs and flows to the learning process.

Simplicity and an emphasis on learner participation are key to keeping the learning moving. It's an art in itself to establish and maintain a rhythm within this movement, across the training as a whole, and within its various sequences.

During both planning and facilitating learning activities the important question is: What sequence is most going to support what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls a "flow state," a sense of timelessness in which learners are focused and engaged?

The job of planning and facilitating a training is like that of an orchestra conductor. After arranging the score, you guide your orchestra, which is comprised of talented musicians, as they play the music, flowing together in harmony.

Choreograph a Dynamic Training Plan

Try to develop a training plan that cycles back and forth between different kinds of learning tasks:

Active	→	Passive
Right Brain	→	Left Brain
High Energy	→	Low Energy
Conscious	→	Unconscious
Cognitive	→	Kinesthetic
Individual-based	→	Group-based
Small Group-based	→	Large Group-based

Respond to Cues

To establish and maintain such rhythm, the trainer needs to be in-tune with the group, attending to subtle shifts in learners' energy, presence, and motivation. And here, again, is where we can think of training as a dance. While facilitating the training, the trainer dances between learner-centered and guiding/directive approaches, or, the planned curriculum and your learners' needs.

Incorporate Ritual to Support Rhythm and Flow

Learners seem to appreciate the predictability of routine within a training. The consistency of **rituals**—brief activities that always occur at particular moments—help to ground people in the rhythm and flow.

Examples of rituals:

- ⇒ **Reflection and Sharing.** Begin each day of a multi-day workshop with time for reflection and the sharing of key learnings from the previous day.
- ⇒ **Debriefing and Feedback.** Conclude activities with a structured debriefing and/or exchange of feedback.

See also, under "Sequence Learning Activities" below, ways to direct and re-direct participants by using consistent auditory signals.

Be Flexible with Your Agenda to Support Rhythm and Flow

"Be clear about your goal, but be flexible about the process of achieving it."

Brian Tracy, author of *Goals!*

Being flexible doesn't mean abandoning your planned agenda. It means making shifts, often quite subtle, to accommodate the group. For example, when your trainees have burning questions or strong concerns, you may need to adjust your current track.

Play To Your Strengths To Re-Establish Rhythm

"In his functioning as a facilitator of learning, the leader endeavors to recognize and accept his own limitations."

Carl Rogers

When it's clear that something about a training workshop is not flowing, such as if learners seem lost or confused, or you're unsure what to do next, or you're not on your game, shift gears and play to your strengths to re-establish the direction and re-gain the flow of the training.

Do What You're Comfortable Doing

- ⇒ Tell a story.
- ⇒ Initiate a "go-to" activity you are comfortable with.
- ⇒ Demonstrate a particular MI technique with the help of a volunteer.
- ⇒ Show a favorite video clip.
- ⇒ Give a brief lecture on a specific aspect of MI that you can readily articulate.

Sequence Learning Activities To Support Rhythm And Flow

Guiding the learning of MI involves planning and managing various hands-on learning activities for participants to engage in throughout the training. Careful, deliberate sequencing of activities is critical for maintaining the rhythm and flow of the training.

Plan and Set Up Learning Activities with Intention

If you take too casual an approach to planning and managing activities you run the risk of frustrating and confusing learners, not to mention wasting valuable time. Here are some guidelines for setting up activities with intention:

- ⇒ **Be Clear.** Give crystal clear, precise instructions leaving no room for ambiguity.
- ⇒ **Speak Succinctly.** Be sparing with your words. Instead of *Here's what I would like you to do. I would like you to stand up, try, Please stand up.*
- ⇒ **Give Instructions.** Simply tell people what you'd like them to do rather than ask. Instead of *Would you mind standing up now?* say, *Please stand up.*
- ⇒ **Provide Both Verbal and Visual Instructions.** In addition to telling participants what to do, include written instructions they can refer to, such as on slides.
- ⇒ **Confirm Understanding.** After providing instructions, ask if anyone needs clarification" *What final questions, if any, do you have?*
- ⇒ **Demonstrate.** Briefly demonstrate the activity yourself.
- ⇒ **No fixin'.** After you've given all your instructions and participants are ready to begin, playfully inquire about intentions to fix or not. I like to fire off a series of close-ended questions: *Are you going to provide education?...Teach a skill?...Give advice?...Share your wisdom?...Provide feedback?...Excavate the client's past?...Re-shape the client's cognitions?...Tell the client what to do? If you're not going to fix, what are you going to do?*

Time Management of Activity

- ⇒ **Follow the Goldilocks Principle.** Set a time frame that's short enough to keep the energy up, but long enough for learning.
- ⇒ **Keep to the Allotted Time.** Use a timer to ensure that exercises stop on time.

Supporting the Activity

*"Mom says we can learn from our mistakes.
So let's make some!"
Bil and Jeff Keane, "The Family Circus."*

- ⇒ **Emphasize an Expectation of Non-Perfection.** Remind trainees that the exercise is a practice" *Don't take yourself too seriously. Perfectionism is not allowed. Take your time.*
- ⇒ **Be Available.** Let learners know that if they raise their hand, you'll come assist them.
- ⇒ **Be Present.** Circulate around the learning space. Pay attention to how learners are progressing through the activity. Always be ready to offer guidance. Avoid doing other things such as checking messages, adjusting slides, or talking with your co-trainer.

Concluding the Activity

- ⇒ **Signal Transitions and Conclusion.** Use an appropriate sound to call learners' attention to a transition within and the conclusion of an activity. See below for some ideas.

Ritual: Auditory Signals

Cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien, author of *The Four-Fold Way* provides a helpful guide for integrating elements of ceremonial traditions of ancient cultures, including the use of different instruments for specific sound signals.

Bell	→	To gain the attention of participants. To signal the start of an activity. To signal the end of an activity.
Rattle	→	To signal a transition during activity.
Click Sticks	→	To break an undesirable pattern such as "fixin'" or "roadblocks to listening."

Integrate Debriefing Into Activity

"...Often...the conversation about the exercise [is] more valuable than what the exercise itself produced."

Guy Undrill, MINTie

Always include time at the end of the activity for learners to debrief. Remember the **Goldilocks Principle**: set a time that is long enough for learners to articulate what they learned but not so long that people spend more time talking about MI than doing it.

Debrief with the following types of questions:

- ◆ What are your key learnings from this activity?
- ◆ What is your one big take away?
- ◆ If you could do the activity over, what would you do differently?
- ◆ What was most challenging?
- ◆ Where did you get stuck?
- ◆ What was easy?
- ◆ What was most comfortable?
- ◆ What do you feel especially good about?
- ◆ What is something new or different you will bring into your work or life because of this exercise?

Appropriate Scaffolding Helps Learners to Stay the Course

It is frustrating for a trainer to provide clear instructions for a learning activity only to observe learners engaging in behaviors that do not adhere to MI principles or otherwise stray from the activity. I have learned that it is *crucial* to **prepare a concrete, step-by-step plan for activities**, especially real- and role-plays.

⇒ See **Appendix D** (The Process of MI) for a sample activity road map to assist learners in staying the course during a real-play.



FIT BREAKS INTO THE TRAINING PLAN

Remember to include breaks as you map out your training plan. **Take lots of breaks!** Avoid going more than 90 minutes without giving your learners a rest.

Breaks

- ◆ Help both trainer and learner to maintain their energy and focus
- ◆ Provide the trainer with downtime to make adjustments to the sequence of learning tasks and update slides accordingly

Break Time

- ⇒ **Break at high points during the learning process.** Doing so supports an upbeat energy in the room. Learners will tend to engage in more MI-related conversation during break time and return with greater anticipation about what will happen next.
- ⇒ **Set an end time for breaks.** Rather than saying, *Let's take a 15-minute break, say, We'll start again at 1:30 p.m., sharp.* This increases the chance of learners being in their seats and ready to learn at the designated time.

Break Ambiance

- ⇒ **Play mood-setting music during breaks.** Consider the time of day or the energy level of the group when choosing music. It's also fun to create a playlist tailored to the geographical location of a training workshop. For example, I facilitate many workshops in San Francisco, and have created a "SF Playlist" that reflects the vibe of The City that includes legendary musicians spanning the 1960s to the present.
- ⇒ **Project MI-Related Quotations on a screen.** Over time, build a collection of quotations from which you can draw on according to where you were when you broke or where you're headed after the break.

Sampling of MI-Quotations

My preference is to use quotations from MINTies whenever possible. Below are some of the quotations I routinely project.

“Motivation for change is actually quite malleable and is particularly formed in the context of relationships.”

Bill Miller

“When we listen, they talk, and when they talk, they discover.”

Suzanne Murphy

“Empathy is saying more than the client said, but not more than the client meant.”

Allan Zuckoff

“The quality of letting go of one’s aspirations surely lies at the heart of professionalism in this field.”

Steve Rollnick

“Ambivalence is like a barbed wire fence. You want the client to sit on it long enough [to] where they choose to get off because it is too painful.”

Ken Resnicow

“Listening is an act of love, and when you listen with the intention of helping someone to change their life in accord with their values, that’s love with a goal.”

Allan Zuckoff

“This is a place many people get stuck with MI—becoming overly cautious to do anything that might be perceived as confrontational. So instead of guiding the conversation to explore the ambivalence or developing discrepancy or evoke change, we opt for supporting autonomy in a way that actually sustains the status quo.”

Joel Porter

“People possess substantial personal expertise and wisdom regarding themselves, and tend to develop in a positive direction, given the proper conditions and support.”

Bill Miller & Terri Moyers

Take Brief Movement Breaks To Re-Charge

If I get the sense, especially in the afternoon, that learners are feeling tired or sluggish or antsy, it's often a good time for a **five-minute impromptu movement break**.

- ⇒ Queue up a high energy song and invite learners to stand and join you in moving their bodies: *Shake your arms, your hands, your legs, your feet. Shake everything.*
- ⇒ Integrate simple stretches and energizing movements between shakes.
- ⇒ Close by having everyone stand with eyes closed, silently reflecting on a key MI-learning garnered during the previous hour.



TRANSITION WITH INTENTION

“The notes I handle no better than many pianists. But the pause between the notes... Ah, that is where the art resides.”

Arthur Schrabl

When I'm surfing I like to take full advantage of the space between the waves, knowing that that these moments are important for catching one's breath, taking stock, and getting ready for what's coming next. During training, the “space between the waves” occurs at the transitions after a break and between learning activities.

Golden Moments

Think of these transitions as brief—no more than five minute—“golden moments” that help learners shift into the next learning space with ease. They may take the form of:

- ◆ Projecting a quotation or cartoon on screen
- ◆ Showing a YouTube clip
- ◆ Reading aloud an excerpt from a research article, news story, fictional work, or transcript of a clinical encounter
- ◆ Playing a song
- ◆ Guiding a mindfulness exercise

I keep a designated **Golden Moments File** and whenever I come across appropriate material to show on screen, read aloud from, play, etc. I immediately file it for future use.

Transitions Between Activities: Sample Golden Moments

Here are examples of transitional strategies I might use to prepare learners for the next activity.

Quotation to Project

“The word that allows yes, the word that makes no possible. The word that puts the free in freedom and takes the obligation out of love. The word that throws a window open after the final door is closed. The word upon which all adventure, all exhilaration, all meaning, all honor depends. The word that fires evolution’s motor of mud. The word the cocoon whispers to the caterpillar. The word that molecules recite before bonding. The word that separates that which is dead from that which is living. The word no mirror can turn around... CHOICE.”

—Tom Robbins, *Still Life with Woodpecker*

Novel Excerpt to Read Aloud

“For the last decade [fictional psychiatric hospital] Madrona Hill had been moving away from the Johnson Model of ‘ambush style’ intervention in favor of the more inclusive Miller & Rollnick ‘motivational’ approach, which studies have shown to be more effective. However, due to the secrecy dictated by the FBI, the Johnson model was chosen.”

From the novel: *Where’d You Go Bernadette*, by Maria Sempel.

Research Study Excerpt to Read Aloud

“Researcher Tom Renier—a sophomore at Deluth High School—found a statistically significant link between effective hand washing and school absenteeism. Specifically, he demonstrated that a technique called motivational interviewing is effective in getting students to do a better job of washing their hands, thus staying healthier.

– Deluth News Tribune, May 11, 2013

YouTube Clip to Show

“Stop It.” Bob Newhart as therapist Dr. Switzer.

Music to Play

Amy Winehouse song “Rehab.” Invite listeners to accompany with the kinesthetic signal of drumming when lyrics include change talk. (See “Use Kinesthetic Strategies to Activate Internalization of Material,” below.)

Transcript of Clinical Encounter to Project and Sign

Project the transcript on the screen. Have one learner reads the words of the clinician and another read the words of the client. The rest of the group responds with MI sign-language. (See “Use Kinesthetic Strategies to Activate Internalization of Material,” below.)

Mindfulness Moment to Lead

Guided muscle relaxation.



MAKE TIME FOR REFLECTION AND CONSOLIDATION

*I begged the wise one to tell me
the secret of the world.
Gently he whispered,
"Be quiet, the secret cannot be spoken,
It is wrapped in silence."
Rumi*

Whether you are facilitating a single-day or multi-day training, designate times during the workshop for learners to reflect. Times well-suited to such reflection include:

- ◆ Immediately prior to breaks
- ◆ Between activities

Introduce the "Pearl Bucket" for Storing Reflections

- ⇒ Invite learners to spend a minute or so in silence reflecting:
 - ◆ What is it they don't want to forget?
 - ◆ What is it they most want to bring into their work life?
- ⇒ Include a place in handout packets, a "Pearl Bucket," for learners to jot down these reflections.
- ⇒ At the end of the day or at the start of the following day, invite your group of learners to select and share, in no more than fifteen seconds, one key learning from their bucket—their "King Kong Pearl"—that stands out above the rest.

This process provides learners with a review of material and an opportunity for the trainer to reinforce what participants are learning.

Include A Consolidation Activity

At the completion of the training (especially a multi-day training), it's helpful to include a **key learning moment**.

Partner Interview

Invite learners to pair up and interview one another about what they've learned and how they imagine applying it in their work.

Group Project

Either as a whole group or in small groups, invite learners to create something that sums up everything they've learned about MI such as a:

- ◆ Recipe
- ◆ Collage
- ◆ Mime
- ◆ Rap
- ◆ Song

The MI-YMCA SONG

One training group I worked with had the good fortune of having a supervisor who was convinced that her staff would not remember and use MI unless that they had a song to sing about it. Post training she wrote a MI song to the tune of The Village People's "YMCA." I often play this song to wrap up a workshop, inviting learners to sing along.

OARS: THE MI SONG

Written by Julie Engberg, January 17, 2008.

Young man, are you stuck in a rut?
I said, young man, feeling bad in your gut?
I said, I know a new thing you can try
It is great! It's called MI.

Listen—a key skill to learn
The foundation—the participant's turn
To share the real meaning behind
Every change they have in mind

Chorus (repeat twice)
It's time to use all the O—A—R—S
It's time to use all the O—A—R—S
It will make you feel good
The participant too
It will change everything you do.

Affirming their changes right now
Reflecting their words of how
To make change in their own way
You summarize all they say.

Open are the questions that flow
To find out what they already know
And they tell you what they want to know more

As you “Explore—Offer—Explore.”

Chorus (repeat twice)

It’s time to use all the O—A—R—S

It’s time to use all the O—A—R—S

It will make you feel good

The participant too

It will change everything you do.

Young man, if you want to know how

Inspire the changes right now

Just try it and give it a chance

Make your counseling into a dance.

That’s when the tables have turned

You can practice all the skills that you’ve learned

You hear change talk and your spirits soar

So you say “Tell me more.”

Chorus (repeat twice)

It’s time to use all the O—A—R—S

It’s time to use all the O—A—R—S

It will make you feel good

The participant too

It will change everything you do.



INTERPERSE DRILLS THROUGHOUT TRAINING

“The player who learns the fundamentals of basketball through repetition is going to have a much better chance of succeeding.”

Coach John Wooden

In my youth, I fantasized that someday I would become a basketball coach, deftly guiding players in the fundamentals of the sport with my whistle and clipboard. While still a connoisseur of basketball, I chuckle that I’ve shifted my fantasy to MI, replacing the whistle with bells, yet still focused on fundamentals, just focused on a different kind.

As Bill Miller and others have said, becoming fluent in MI is like learning to play the piano, hit a golf ball, ride a surf board, perform knee surgery, or fly an airplane. All of these endeavors require the **repetitive practice** of particular actions until they become unconsciously fluid.

Drills for Getting to the Gestalt

Drills are an essential practice for developing mastery of the various parts of motivational interviewing, and ultimately, through the linking together of these various parts, to mastering the gestalt of MI.

Drills for Picking up the Pace

Besides supporting MI proficiency, drills, interspersed throughout the curriculum, also provide important moments for picking up the pace of the training process and guiding learners away from over-thinking of MI to a more spontaneous, intuitive, reflective orientation.

Types of MI Drills

Drills can be an effective way to **get learners out of their heads**. They are quick, repetitive activities, similar to the numerous times during a basketball practice players might shoot free throws or deliver crisp chest passes. Drills designed to hone specific MI skills might include:

- ◆ **“Batting Practice”** for quick reflective listening responses
- ◆ **Elicit-Provide-Elicit** for practicing information exchange
- ◆ **Drumming for Change Talk** for identifying change talk
- ◆ **“Snatching Change Talk From the Jaws of Ambivalence”** for summarizing mixed feelings
- ◆ **Beginning Real- and Role-Plays By Asking Permission.** Beginning every real- or role-play with the exchange of a friendly greeting, name, role, agenda, allotted time, and the request for permission

Coaching Participants Through Drills

The coach’s responsibilities include:

- ◆ Incorporating variations and increasing complexity into drills.
- ◆ Providing immediate, individualized feedback.



MAKE OBSERVATIONS AN ACTIVE PRACTICE

Observations are an important activity to include in the sequence of learning activities. Provide opportunities for learners to observe demonstrations of motivational interviewing periodically throughout the training.

MI can be observed in various formats:

- ◆ Video
- ◆ Audio
- ◆ Live

Incorporate Written or Kinesthetic Elements in Observation Activities

Observations are most effective when learners are doing more than merely watching, but are given a specific responsibility. Active observation can take the form of written records, kinesthetic approaches, or a combination.

Combining Methods of Active Observation

Try the following to combine methods of observation.

- ⇒ Break learners into small groups.
- ⇒ Assign each group a *kinesthetic signal* to display when they observe the corresponding behavior during the interview. (Example, have one group sound *ahhh* whenever they hear open-ended questions.)
- ⇒ Have each group designate one person as the *coder*, recording a written tally of each occurrence of the kinesthetic signal.



USE KINESTHETIC STRATEGIES TO ACTIVATE INTERNALIZATION

Kinesthetic learning strategies add spice to your training and are enjoyable for learners. This “**MI sign language**” helps learners develop **sensory memories** of key MI skills and concepts and can enhance the conditioning and internalization of the new communication behaviors they are learning.

Using MI Sign Language Allows Learners to Be Actively Engaged in their Observations

I like to introduce kinesthetic links when participants are observing motivational interviewing, either via video clips or practice sessions. Learners are instructed to use specific kinesthetic signals to highlight different aspects of an interview.

Learners can sense the difference between MI adherent and MI non-adherent interviews by the contrast in sounds and movement. An MI adherent interview can yield a symphony compared to the quieter observation that occurs during an interview with close-ended questions, fixin’ behaviors, and a lack of change talk.

MI Sign Language	
OARS	
Open-ended questions	→ ahhh verbalized while opening up arms and hands
Affirmations	→ two hand claps
Reflective listening statements	→ two finger snaps
Summaries	→ two thigh pats
CHANGE TALK	
Preparatory change talk	→ drum roll on table top
Mobilizing change talk	→ palms pressed together massaging imagined pearl
MI NON-ADHERENT BEHAVIORS	
Close-ended questions	→ <i>errr</i> verbalized while forming fists
Fixin'	→ fists hammering together
Taming the right reflex	→ sitting on hands (literally)



INCORPORATE LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS

The immediacy of the demonstration adds a spark to the interactive learning environment.

Demonstrations:

- ◆ Create interest and enthusiasm in learners
- ◆ Generate questions from learners
- ◆ Underscore the expertise and credibility of the trainer

Execute Demonstrations with Care

A poorly executed demonstration will undermine the learning process. I have learned the hard way the importance of being thoroughly prepared and treating demonstrations, especially the first one, with great care and intention. Effective demonstrations:

- ◆ Feel spontaneous
- ◆ Progress simply and cleanly
- ◆ Are limited to no more than ten minutes
- ◆ Demonstrate MI style and spirit throughout
- ◆ Create a strong platform for the discussion of key elements of MI

Key considerations when setting up demonstrations

- ⇒ **Emphasize Real-Plays Over Role-Plays.** A *real-play* demonstration provides a greater chance of a more natural, spontaneous interview than a *role-play*.
- ⇒ **Encourage Cooperation.** Cooperative clients showcase MI. The participant-turned-client is in the more important position than the interviewer position. A client who is

intentionally difficult and is not responding naturally to the interviewer undercuts the purpose of the demonstration. A cooperative client supports the interviewer in showcasing MI. (See also: "Resistance to Real- or Role-Play Practice" under "Find Ways to Work with the Challenging Learner.")

- ⇒ **Coach Clients To Be Authentic.** Always speak with participants in the client position before real-playing an interview. Coach them to be *authentic* and to respond naturally, and to avoid being intentionally difficult. During the interview, if the client is getting off-track, it's OK to call a quick time-out to whisper some coaching toward more supportive responses. **The client's role is the most important role!**
- ⇒ **Use a Co-Trainer for Role-Plays.** It's ideal to have a co-trainer act as the client in demonstrations that are set-up as role-plays. The co-trainer-client, practiced in MI, can assist the interviewer to gracefully navigate the interview. If the interviewer gets stuck, the client serves as a safety net, offering responses that help the interviewer to regroup. Just as with participant real-plays, the role of the client is not to test the fellow co-trainer's fortitude and ability! Before the training, discuss each of your comfort levels with impromptu demonstrations. If you are both on-board, decide which of you will play the role of client and which the interviewer.

⇒ See **Appendix E** for detailed instructions on leading an interactive group real-play you can use to introduce the audience to motivational interviewing.

Spontaneous Demonstrations

My favorite demonstrations are the impromptu ones that arise spontaneously based on questions or concerns posed by learners.

Can you do MI in a few minutes?

What do you do if you ask permission and the client says, "No"?

What if a client is not ready to make change?

What do you do when you ask an open-ended question and the client won't stop talking?

As discussed earlier, when a learner asks a question during a training session, you can choose to:

- ◆ Stop and answer it
- ◆ Save the question for later
- ◆ Elicit the group's response

But another option is to set up a **spontaneous demonstration** of the scenario with either your co-trainer or the questioner, or a volunteer playing the role of the client.

These demonstrations are short and simple. Too much detail or elaboration can obscure the point you are trying to illustrate. Usually two or three exchanges are sufficient.

Example of a Spontaneous Demonstration: Managing The Talker

Suppose a learner raises the question of how to manage the highly verbal client who won't stop talking.

While the learner is voicing his or her concern, I'll immediately start demonstrating: *Excuse me for interrupting. I want to make sure I understand. Your big concern is how to guide the client who is all over the place and just keeps talking without any focus. Am I getting it? In the remaining time we have, would it be OK if we spent a few more minutes talking about...?*

In this brief exchange, the learner is likely to get the point.

A Spontaneous Demo Is A Risk Worth Taking

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."

Helen Keller

True, a **spontaneous demonstration** requires courage and confidence in your MI skills. Like everything MI-related, you get better at it with practice. Even if your demonstration is rough around the edges, learners will appreciate that you're "getting REAL" and the chance to see motivational interviewing in action.

And remember, if the demo doesn't play out the way you would have liked, you can always start again.



PROVIDE FEEDBACK EARLY AND OFTEN

"Feedback is fundamental for any kind of learning, and immediate feedback is even more helpful."

Miller and Rollnick

Learners become more proficient in MI when they receive feedback and coaching, so make feedback an integral part of the training workshop, introducing learners to the practice of feedback early on in a training.

There are three main sources from which learners can receive feedback:

- ◆ The trainer, who is the first vehicle for offering feedback
- ◆ The designated observer in a real- or role-play activity
- ◆ The person acting as the client in a real- or role-play dyad

Work In Feedback From The Get-Go

Very early in a training workshop, I like to emphasize that one of my primary roles is to offer constructive MI-specific feedback and coaching to the group.

During the course of this training workshop, are you open to me offering you in-the-moment MI-specific feedback and coaching?

Example: Providing Feedback in a Group Setting

Participants can get quickly acquainted with the process of feedback through activities that involve the entire group. For example, set up an activity that invites learners to verbalize reflective listening responses to challenging client statements.

Sample learner response:

"If I'm hearing you correctly it sounds like you've got a good reason to quit—and it's all about your children."

Respond affirmatively after each reflection.

Nice reflection!

After responding, offer a brief dose of feedback.

I've got an idea for fine tuning it. Offer the same reflection, but this time drop the opening announcement: "If I'm hearing you correctly it sounds like you've..." and begin your reflection with, "You" or "So you..."

Allow the learner to revise the reflection.

So you've got a good reason to quit—and it's all about your children.

Elicit.

What was different about your second reflection?

Providing Feedback to Dyads and Small-Groups

In the context of dyad/triad and small group activities, the trainer, ideally, is always in a position to offer feedback and coaching.

Move From Positive Towards Constructive Feedback

The initial emphasis is on positive, strength-based elements. This applies to whoever is providing feedback, whether trainer, observer, or the person in the client role.

As training progresses and participants become more comfortable, the emphasis shifts to include more constructive points.

All feedback scenarios begin with asking permission.

In multi-day training workshops, I have found it helpful to inoculate learners to my feedback, gradually increasing the dose.

Example: Feedback Progression Over Three Days

Day 1. Announce that you are always available to provide feedback during activities.
Raise your hand and I'll come to you immediately.

Day 2. Describe your process for observing and providing general feedback.
During activities I'll be moving quietly about the room, listening to a bit of your conversations. I will not interrupt you unless you invite me in. At the end of the activity, I will offer the entire group general feedback based on my observations. How does this sound?

Day 3. Describe your process for observing and providing more personal, specific feedback.
Today, during activities I'll be moving quietly about the room, listening to your conversations. I may ask permission to interrupt you to offer the interviewer some feedback and coaching. How does this sound?

General Guidelines For Providing Feedback

Here are some guidelines for providing feedback. These guidelines serve as both a constructive means of providing feedback as well as a way of modeling the process of offering feedback.

- ⇒ **Ask Permission.** Create a climate of respect and positive regard: *I have some feedback on this encounter. Would you like to hear it now?*
- ⇒ **Encourage Self-assessment.** *How do you think the encounter went? What went well? What do you think you might do differently next time?*
- ⇒ **Limit the Amount of Feedback.** K.I.S.S.: Keep It Super Simple! Choose a few important areas for concentrating your feedback to avoid overwhelming your learner with too much feedback.
- ⇒ **Be specific.** Be precise in articulating your observations: *"Specifically, you did an excellent job of ... I noticed... Next time you might try..."*
- ⇒ **Include the Learner's Agenda.** Be sure to include feedback on areas of focus identified by the learner prior to observation.

- ⇒ **Respect Readiness.** Consider the timing. Is the learner in a receptive frame of mind, or is s/he distracted, disturbed, upset, etc.?
- ⇒ **Avoid Personal Affronts.** Remain non-judgmental. Focus on behaviors rather than personalities.
- ⇒ **Balance the Feedback.** Offer feedback on areas the learner performed well in addition to suggesting and eliciting ideas for improvement. End on a positive note.

Provide Opportunities For Learners To Practice Giving Feedback

Before having participants offer feedback to each other, provide ways for them to try their hand at processing and articulating what went on during an interview.

Use Video Clips of Motivational Interviewing

- ⇒ You might show several different clips of interviews and have participants record their observations on a simple tracking tool, noting in respective columns the interviewers' strengths (+) and areas to improve (△). (See **Appendix G.**)
- ⇒ Remember that concept of the *parallel process* where you are guiding and modeling MI at the same time? After each video clip, you dance between two roles as you both role-play the interviewer featured in the video and guide the group through the Six Steps for Offering Feedback (see below). As this formula is based on the spirit of MI, the feedback process ultimately becomes a motivational interview.

Six Steps for Offering Feedback

Step 1. Ask permission.

Are you open to receiving my feedback?

Step 2. Explore the positive.

What went well?

Step 3. Agree and/or summarize and offer.

I agree with...and you additionally did a great job of...

Step 4. Explore areas of improvement.

As you think about how it went, what do you think you might you do differently next time?

Step 5. Agree and/or summarize and offer.

I agree with.... I also noticed.... Next time you might consider....

Step 6. Explore personal reflections.

What do you think about my feedback/observations?

What are your key learnings?

Pinpoint Specific MI Practice Behaviors to Monitor

- ⇒ Direct participants to observe and track various MI practices, such as open-ended questions, close-ended questions, and reflective listening statements.
- ⇒ Guide the participants through the feedback process, instructing them in the following order to:
 - ◆ Ask permission.
 - ◆ Give the facts.
 - ◆ Elicit the interviewer's interpretation.

What do you think about these numbers?

What, if anything, surprises you about this feedback?

Example: Offering Learners Their First Dose of Feedback

While weaving in small doses of MI content, here's how I incorporate the practice of providing feedback early on in a training, after the first real-play.

Information

Initial research suggests that a necessary ingredient in becoming skillful in MI is to receive feedback and coaching. For that reason, during our time together, you will have multiple opportunities to both receive and offer feedback.

Instruction

Participants in the client role are then invited to offer brief, positive feedback to their interviewer, after first asking permission.

In twenty seconds or less, let your interviewers know one thing they did or did not do that supported you in speaking naturally and authentically. Most importantly, before offering your positive feedback, ask permission. Doing so extends respects and honors the interviewer's autonomy—a key component to MI.

Signal

Bell rings to initiate dialogue. Bell rings again to signal conclusion of feedback.

Debrief

Participants share with group.

I would love to hear a few examples of positive feedback you just offered your interviewer.

Kinesthetic Feedback

I discuss kinesthetic elements of training more thoroughly in the next section. In terms of feedback, I like to offer the following kinesthetic approach to offering immediate feedback.

Participants Inhabit Dual Roles

Instruct participants acting as clients to inhabit dual roles during the interview. One role is as

the self/client, responding naturally to the proceedings of the interview. The other role is as a learner of MI, observing how the interviewer is responding to you as the client.

The Kinesthetic Gesture

Instruct participant-clients to offer their interviewer kinesthetic feedback, for example, two soft snaps of the fingers if and when they experience the interviewer offering a reflective listening statement.



TELL STORIES ABOUT YOUR MI EXPERIENCES

“Stories have power. They delight, enchant, touch, teach, recall, inspire, motivate, challenge. They help us understand. They imprint a picture on our minds... Want to make a point or raise an issue? Tell a story...”

Janet Litherland

For millennia storytelling has been used as a powerful means for teaching and there’s no better way of capturing the essence of MI—and the hearts of your learners—than by telling a good story.

I rely on storytelling when I want to **re-establish the direction and flow** of a training process.

I have also found it useful to tell a story at the beginning of training when I’m nervous and want **to establish initial engagement and rapport** with an audience.

Develop a Repertoire of Your Own MI Stories

Collect, practice, and refine your stories. Just like with learning MI, telling stories that impact the listener is an art that can be learned with practice.

The best stories are those that come directly from the trainer’s own experiences. They need not be long, but practice them so you can deliver them spontaneously when they relate to topics that arise in the course of a workshop. Craft your stories to address common questions and concerns and keep them in your back pocket, so you can spontaneously deliver them if an appropriate moment arises during a workshop.

Your stories can encompass a number of themes. My personal repertoire includes stories that address:

- ◆ The non-verbal teenager
- ◆ The use of disarming or paradoxical questions with ambivalent clients
- ◆ The use of MI in telephone interventions
- ◆ The client who goes on to naturally make changes on his own after a motivational interview
- ◆ Using motivational interviewing with family members
- ◆ The family member (my grandmother) who could never understand MI
- ◆ Skeptical staff members or co-workers
- ◆ The hostile training participant

The Cliffhanger

My favorite kind of story is the kind that leaves learners on the edge of their seats. To capture learners' attention, I will often launch into an MI-related story at the very beginning of a training session. At a moment when listeners are riveted I stop, ask if the group is OK with the pause and say I'd like to return to the story at the end of the training.

Steve's Go-To Cliffhanger Story: "A Finger In My Chest"

Here's a story about my first taste of the potency of motivational interviewing. I like to begin the story at the opening of a training session and finish it at the conclusion.

In the early 1990s I was working at a health research center in Portland, Oregon. At this time Bill Miller was providing MI consultations for several studies we were conducting in primary care settings. One of these studies was a brief intervention for patients identified as "current cigarette smokers." I was one of the interventionists or "health counselors" in this study, and the story I'm going to tell is about a patient I met with soon after receiving my initial training in MI.

Here's the situation. It was a Friday afternoon and I was just about to walk out the back door of the clinic for the weekend when one of the physicians approached me in something of a panic. He said, "Steve, I have a quick favor to ask that is outside the scope of the study. I've got a patient in Exam Room B and he's driving me crazy. The guy is a ticking heart attack time bomb, he smokes like a chimney, and he's here today because of another upper respiratory infection. For the past couple of years I've been banging my head against the wall trying to get this guy to quit. Nothing has worked. Could you get him to quit?"

I looked like a deer caught in the headlights, but I was already thinking about what I'd been learning about motivational interviewing, such as: I do not have the power to get anybody to change anything about what they do, but I DO have the skills to engage someone in a conversation. I can invite a person to think and talk about the possibility of making some change he or she has agreed to speak with me about. After thinking about this for a moment I said, "Sure, I would be happy to speak with the patient," and I started down the hallway towards the exam room.

Before I opened the door, the doctor came rushing back to me. "Hey, thanks for doing this," he said. "I just want to make sure you're ready for this guy. He's pretty resistant. But, I know you can handle it."

Now feeling a twinge of nervousness, I thanked him for his confidence in me, and proceeded to Exam Room B. I knocked on the door. No response. I knocked again. No response. I knocked a third time. No response.

So what do you think I was thinking? That's it. Either he had bolted and was in the parking lot smoking or something had happened. To make sure everything was OK, I opened up the exam room door.

The room was pitch black. Before I could take a full step forward, a man who seemed about this large and this wide stepped out of the dark, stuck his index finger in my chest, and said in a menacing voice, "If you're here to talk to me about my smoking, you might as well get your little blankety-blank out of here because smoking is my blankety-blank business."

As I've mentioned already, MI is a way of working that makes known what we already know about guiding people towards change. Since you already know motivational interviewing, what do you suppose I did at that moment? You're right, I started back-pedaling down the hallway. In fact, I was heading towards Security. Because the way this man approached me was even more hostile than I'm portraying. I was scared. But, as I'm back-pedaling down the hallway, I begin my motivational interview with him. And this is what I said...

This is where I pause the story and tell my listeners that, with their permission, I'd like to return to it at the end of our time together.

My guess is after we spend two days together you'll have a pretty good sense about what I said next and how the conversation likely proceeded. What I will say is this: after having a ten-minute conversation with this gentleman, he made a commitment to quit smoking. He set a specific quit date and created a plan to support his success. And he ended up following through with it, and as far as I know he is still smoke free.

. . .

The End of the Story

At the end of the training, I tell the rest of the story, taking up from where I left off.

... So, as I was back-pedaling down the hallway, I began my motivational interview. "Thank you," I said. "Thank you for letting me know where you're coming from. Smoking is your business."

And in a booming voice, loud enough for everyone in the medical facility to hear, he yelled, "If smoking is my blankety-blank business, then why do bring your little behind in here?"

I took a step toward him and said, "Well, let me introduce myself. My name is Steve Berg-Smith. I'm one of the health counselors here. My job is to work together with patients in making a decision about what, if anything, they might want to change that will improve their health and well-being. One thing I talk to people about is their smoking. And I'm hearing you loud and clear that you have no interest in talking with anybody about your smoking." I then pivoted around and started walking away from this patient.

He yelled down the hallway, "Stop!"

I stopped and turned around and he exclaimed, "I wouldn't go that far. I've been trying to get rid of these cancer sticks forever. I'm sick of smoking, and I can't stop because I like it too much. I need my butts! I need to smoke!"

I responded by saying, "You need to quit and you need to smoke, and the big problem is that cigarettes are a best friend."

"Yeah, that's it!" the client said.

I then asked, "So, what do you like about smoking?"

The patient then did something that has never happened since. He invited me into the exam room, sat me down, and while standing in front of me proceeded to tell me everything he liked about smoking, which included that smoking linked him to his friends. "Those of us who are still smoking look after one another. We're the ones who take breaks at work. We laugh louder, have more fun, and socialize the way people used to."

After listening and summarizing what he liked about smoking, I said, "You mentioned you've had a heck of time getting rid of those 'cancer sticks.' As you see it, what are the downsides in continuing to smoke?"

The question opened up a flood gate. He gave voice to a host of things that weren't working for him. One issue that brought tears to his eyes was that his daughter was soon to give birth to his first grandchild. "If I keep on smoking and living the way I do, I probably won't see that baby turn one-year old."

While he spoke, I simply held compassionate presence, reflecting and encouraging. After a few minutes of listening I summarized the big picture: "On one hand, smoking is kinda like a best friend. On the other hand, smoking costs an arm and leg, you lose your breath when going up stairs, you know it's killing you, and there's that new grandbaby who you want to be there for and see grow up. Does that sound about right?"

Following a resounding “yeah,” I tested the waters by asking, “So, at this point, where does smoking fit into your future?”

Without hesitating, he put out his finger (fortunately not in my chest this time) and said, “I need to quit, you tell me how to do it, and I’ll just frickin’ do it.”

I reflected with a simple statement, “Now is the time.”

This prompted him to say again, “I need to quit, tell me how to do it.” Wanting to set the stage for him to possibly discover and identify his own way of quitting I started to say, “I do have a few ideas, but before I share mine, I’m curious to know what your ideas are.” But before I could finish, he blurted out, “Don’t play with me—just tell me.”

I followed by saying, “I would be happy to share a few ideas in a moment. It’s just that I’ve learned that the ideas the patient comes up with are often the best ideas. I want to make sure you have the chance to step forward first.”

This prompted him to give voice to an idea for quitting: “Oh, what the heck. I just need to find some three day weekend. Mark it off on my calendar. Lock myself in my house, get rid of the smokes and ashtrays, load up on good food, get some movies to watch, and just frickin’ do it.”

I responded, “You’ve got a plan. When are you going to do it?”

He responded, “Don’t play with me. I don’t know when I’d do it.”

I asked, “Would it help if I got out a calendar?”

“I guess,” he said. I excused myself for a moment to grab what is now an old fashion desk-sized calendar from my office. I returned with it to the exam room and placed it on his lap and he started flipping through the pages until he landed on a month maybe four or five months down the road. He said, “I’m going to do it here!”

We then spent several minutes talking about his “quit weekend” and details to support his success. With my assistance, he wrote down his plan on a prescription pad, and I made a commitment to call him on both the day before and the day after his “quit weekend.”

The patient seemed to feel good about his plan. Before we wrapped up, I pulled out a laminated ruler, placed it in his hands and said, “One last thing. On this scale from 0-10, with 0 being not at all confident, and 10 being 100% confident, how confident are you that you’ll come out of that three-day weekend being smoke-free?” He picked a three.

When I asked, “How come a three?” he said, “Because of my next door neighbor.” I said, “What do mean ‘your neighbor’?” He said, “Dang it. That weekend is during football season. Both me and my next door neighbor are divorced. During football season—especially on Sundays—we hang out in his garage, play pool, smoke butts, drink beer, watch games. If he knew I was trying to quit smoking, he’d bang my door down.”

I reflected, “The big obstacle to success is the guy next door.”

“He won’t let me do it,” the patient responded. “I know him too good.”

I pointed to the ruler he was holding, and said, “So you’re a three. What would it take for you to move to a five or a six, where you might be a bit more confident?”

“I know what I’m going to do,” he chuckled, “I’m going to buy my neighbor one of these cheap-ass tickets to Las Vegas I saw advertised in the paper and get him out of the neighborhood that weekend.”

To bring the story full circle, the patient who put his finger in my chest in our initial conversation successfully got through that weekend smoke-free. Yes, he did buy his neighbor a ticket to Las Vegas. We did talk before and after his quit-weekend. And in our final conversation six months post quit-weekend, he was still smoke free.

I tell this story because it was one of my first opportunities to really experience how potent MI can be, especially in a challenging situation. My hope is that all of you find similar success with motivational interviewing.



ALLOW AMPLE TIME TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

“Silence is golden when you can’t think of a good answer.”

Muhammad Ali

Over the years, the one consistent piece of constructive feedback I’ve gleaned from post-training evaluations is that I don’t allow enough time for questions. Thus, my on-going challenge is to keep the learning moving while still allowing ample time for learner’s questions and concerns.

Designate Question-and-Answer Time

Especially in multi-day events, it's useful to have several formal times to address learner questions and concerns. I like to call this **living room time**, it's a time for the trainer to sit down casually with learners, usually after a break, and address their burning questions and concerns.

Answer Questions Pertinent to Current Topic

If, during your training session, a question or concern is specific to your current MI topic, address it succinctly and clearly. If the question does not concern the current topic, the Bike Rack (see below) is a place to save it for later.

Acknowledge Burning Questions

When your trainees have burning questions or strong concerns, you have several options. You can pause to:

- ⇒ Record the concern on a designated chart pad to return to later. (See "Bike Rack," below.)
- ⇒ Assure the group that your plans include addressing this concern, letting them know at what point during the session this will be.
- ⇒ Share a personal anecdote relevant to the concern. (See "Tell Stories About Your MI Experiences," above.)
- ⇒ Enact a spontaneous demonstration. (See "Incorporate Live Demonstrations," above.)
- ⇒ Provide a quick, provocative response.

Learners often voice concern about how much time they perceive motivational interviewing will require. Bill Miller's response to participants who say they don't have time to do MI is: "You don't have time not to do this."

The Bike Rack

The Bike Rack is sheet of chart pad paper taped to the wall where you can "park" learner questions and concerns.

Park Off-Topic Questions on a Bike Rack

The Bike Rack is especially helpful for recording off-topic questions and concerns

Use the Bike Rack to Buy Time

If you're not sure how to answer a question, buy yourself time by parking it on the Bike Rack. Let learners know you'll address the question later in the training.

Visit the Bike Rack During Breaks

During breaks, it's helpful to review the Bike Rack, thinking about when you can address each item.

Elicit Group Response to Questions and Concerns

For particular questions or concerns that don't fit naturally into the flow of your planned training, set aside time towards the end of the workshop for a brainstorming activity. Divide learners into small groups, assigning each group one of the topics to discuss. End the session with each group sharing their suggestions for solutions to the topics.

Be Prepared for Frequently Asked Questions and Common Concerns

"How do you approach a client who says 'No' after you've asked permission?"

"MI takes too much time."

These are two examples of what you can expect learners to ask you to address during your training. Practice your responses to these kinds of questions and concerns. Build a repertoire of various multi-modal ways of addressing concerns (such as a succinct response, a short demonstration, a brief story, etc.).

⇒ See **Appendix H** for a list of common questions and concerns compiled by MINTies Caroline Yahne and Theresa Moyers in a document titled "Six Common Objections Trainees Voice About Motivational Interviewing: Suggested Responses."



FIND WAYS TO WORK WITH THE CHALLENGING LEARNER

"We have found that...tensions are far less likely to arise when the interviewer follows the spirit and practices of MI."

Miller and Rollnick

Naturally, challenging learner dynamics will arise. Yet, over the years of facilitating training workshops I've noticed a decrease in the occurrence of challenging learner behaviors that directly corresponds to my use of MI as a style for training. Below is a list of manifestations of various challenging behaviors along with ideas for working through them.

Resistance to Real- or Role-Play Practice

This common area of learner resistance is easily overcome by following these guidelines:

- ⇒ **Emphasize choice.** Never require participation.
- ⇒ **Incorporate this type of practice in the training sequence right off.** Set up the first practice within the first half hour of your workshop.
- ⇒ **Focus on real-playing over role-playing.** Learner-clients get to directly experience the effects of MI. Learner-interviewers get "clients" who tend to behave more authentically rather than playing the role of the client from hell.

- ⇒ **Encourage changes of partner.** While emphasizing that it's their choice, encourage learners to find new partners after each practice rotation. Doing so prevents the forming of chatty, isolated couples.
- ⇒ **Provide structure.** Coach learners step by step through the real- or role-play process, especially during the early stages of a workshop.
- ⇒ **Keep the practices brief.** The ideal time frame is five to ten minutes.
- ⇒ **Space out the practices.** My general rule of thumb is no more than four real- or role-play activities per day, with ample space between each practice. Doing so prevents burnout, keeps learners fresh.

Shy Learners

The challenge with shy or reticent learners is finding ways to comfortably integrate them into the learning process.

Safety in Small Groups

Incorporate a number of activities for small groups of four to six learners into the learning sequence. The small group format supports inclusion, and provides more safety than dyad, triad or large group activities.

One-to-One Opportunities

Make it clear you are always available during breaks for conversation with anyone who has questions, comments, or feedback they don't feel comfortable voicing in front of the entire group.

Talkative Learners

Inevitably, there are always a few participants who have much to say and are the first to offer their responses. Rather than reassure the group that everyone will have the opportunity to speak, my preference is to invite those who have already spoken to be silent.

If you've already offered a reflection, please keep silent to allow us to hear new voices.

Cliques

When providing on-site training workshops, it's common for specific work teams or friends to want to sit together. This is to be expected and usually not an issue.

On rare occasion side conversations or resistance to participation make it necessary to separate groups to support a quality learning experience for all participants.

One way of re-combining groups is to hand out a colored piece of paper, folder, or sticker to each learner as they return to the room at the beginning of new day, after lunch, or after a break and to invite them to sit at the table with that color displayed. Groups are then referred to by their particular color (e.g., "The Green Group").

5 – Preparing For A Training Event

“He who is best prepared can best serve his moment of inspiration.”
Samuel Taylor Coleridge



Key Learnings

Focus on outcomes.
Embrace short events.
Know your learners.
Develop a sequencing framework.
Work with a co-trainer.
Get organized.
Prepare handout packets.
Keep preparing until take-off.

This chapter presents some ideas and guidelines for planning and preparing for an MI training event.



FOCUS ON OUTCOMES

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you might not get there.”

Yogi Berra

The first step to planning an MI training event is to focus on the outcomes. These objectives and hopes serve as a compass to guide the planning and facilitation of the MI learning process. I divide outcomes into professional and personal development.

Outcomes for Professional Development

These types of outcomes are framed in terms to satisfy continuing education requirements and are listed on promotional materials and workshop descriptions.

Example: Professional Development Outcomes for a Two-Day Introductory Training

Outcomes related to professional development might include that by the end of a two-day introductory training, participants will be able to:

- ◆ Describe the “spirit” and key principles of motivational interviewing (MI)
- ◆ Observe and debrief demonstrations and DVD examples of MI
- ◆ Demonstrate and practice the interpersonal style and primary skills for evoking intrinsic motivation for healthy behavior change
- ◆ Receive individual feedback in MI practice behavior
- ◆ Develop a personal plan for practicing and incorporating the primary skills and strategies of MI into counseling practice

Outcomes for Personal Development

Though less demonstrable than the outcomes related to professional development, it’s important to consider what you **hope** for your participants.

- ◆ What do you hope learners will walk away with at the end of training?
- ◆ What do you hope they’ll be able to do better?
- ◆ How do you hope this experience will help them in their jobs?

Share your hopes for the participants’ personal development within the first few minutes of your workshop.

Example: Personal Development Outcomes for a Multi-Day Introductory Training

My hopes for participants attending a training over several days might include that they:

- ◆ Are willing to experience and practice the skills and strategies of MI
- ◆ Leave with three new ideas to integrate into their behavior change consultations with clients
- ◆ Feel increased confidence in their ability to activate their clients' internal motivation to make and sustain behavior changes
- ◆ Have the desire to learn more about MI



EMBRACE SHORT EVENTS

“Even with relatively short little snippets of time and physical discomfort, as trainers we have a real opportunity to engage with our audience, encourage helpful conversations and promote reflection about MI related practices. For me, being a MINT member and having shared ideas with members over the years is central to managing to make the best of whatever time is offered to me, under the most challenging of circumstances.”

Claire Lane, MINTie

Ask Bill Miller, “Can you do MI in a few minutes?” and he'll respond, “Can you play music in a few minutes?” Similarly, the music of MI can certainly be played in a brief presentation.

Despite the limitations inherent in the short event, they offer significant opportunities to:

- ◆ Practice creativity
- ◆ Model brevity
- ◆ Use MI practices to guide the audience toward further exploration of motivational interviewing

Because short MI training events require you to be crisp, concise, and forward-moving, they can help to enhance your training of more comprehensive events.

Overcoming Resistance To Facilitating Short Events

Five years or so into my role as an MI trainer, I made a decision to avoid facilitating events less than three hours long. Every now and then I'd present at a conference, but I simply found short events frustrating, unsatisfying and ineffective for supporting the learning of MI.

After several years of boycotting short events, I was invited to present a ninety-minute plenary session on motivational interviewing to an audience of several hundred nursing conference attendees. After hedging for several weeks, an internal light bulb went off during a walk. Perhaps this ninety-minute session could be a great opportunity to mobilize attendees' internal motivation to learn more about MI. Maybe this event could be a catalyst to excite people about MI. Maybe the primary objective of my presentation could be: *To get people to decide whether or not to learn more about MI.*

Once I let go of the notion that I had to support the initial development of MI skills in ninety minutes, my creative fire got lit and I actually had fun crafting the choreography of my presentation.

I delivered a mini-workshop that was highly interactive, engaging, and well-received by the audience. Now I don't run from short events—I embrace them.



KNOW YOUR LEARNERS

To effectively draft your desired outcomes and develop the framework for a training, you must know something about your learners.

Once you have an idea of the people and the environment they work in, you can begin the process of customizing the training to meet the needs of the particular group.

Never assume that you know who your learners are going to be. Before working with a particular group, ask lots of questions to find out as much as possible about the learners.

Along with talking with people in primary **leadership positions**: event organizer, management team, clinical supervisors, CEO, director, etc, it's helpful to interview a few **staff** before the training.

Ask questions such as:

- ◆ What professional group(s) will you be training (e.g., probation officer, social worker, dietician, physician, etc.)?
- ◆ What context do they work in? What are their job responsibilities? What do they do in a normal day?
- ◆ What behaviors or issues are they primarily responsible for guiding people to make change in?
- ◆ What prior training have they had in MI? What prior training have they had in counseling and behavioral change approaches?
- ◆ Are learners required to attend the training?
- ◆ What is management hoping to achieve from the MI training?
- ◆ What are learners likely to expect from the training? What will they want? What are their needs? What are their strengths? Where are their struggles?
- ◆ How do the learners generally like to learn?
- ◆ What, if anything, is going on in the culture of this organization that would be helpful to know about?

Often, answers from front line staff will differ from management. In addition, you may find that your initial assessment of a learning group may not match how its members actually present in person.

Think of the assessment as a guide, not something set in stone. Never pre-judge a group. Be open to outcome.

Learner Assessment Is A Guide...Not Necessarily Reality

After one thorough assessment of a learning group, it seemed pretty clear I was likely to meet strong levels of sustain talk specific to people not wanting to learn MI.

But within the first few minutes of a three-day workshop, I detected an immediate overall desire in the audience to learn MI. So you never know.



DEVELOP A SEQUENCING FRAMEWORK

“Choreography and creativity - it's my matrix; let's see where we can move.”

Wayne McGregor, Choreographer

What is an appropriate process for teaching MI in a workshop setting? At one end of the spectrum is a design based on a **linear, step-by-step sequencing** of learning activities. At the other end is the foregoing of a design in favor of a **hodgepodge collection** of activities to select from at random.

Invest the Time

It takes a lot of work, along with trial and error, to figure out an effective training plan. Each trainer must develop his or her own “choreography philosophy.” But once you’ve made the investment and have a sequencing framework in place, you then have the freedom to focus primarily on facilitating the flow of MI learning experiences in a creative and engaging manner.

Once you develop your own sequencing framework, you may find your trainings to increase in originality, with the result that no two trainings end up being the same. Each training takes on a life of its own based on any number of factors, including:

- ◆ Length of training
- ◆ The context of the learning
- ◆ The needs and personality of the group
- ◆ Your intuition about what will best further the learning

Design a Broad-Based Training Structure

My preference is for designing a broad-based training structure that leaves ample room for improvisation and the unexpected. I base my training design on:

- ◆ The philosophy of using MI as a style for training
- ◆ The training objectives (oriented to both professional and personal-development) that I develop for each event
- ◆ The classic curriculum design model of spiral sequencing

Repetitive Sequencing

The sequencing takes into consideration the desired rhythm and flow, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Each presentation of key principles, through illustration and practice spirals repeatedly, with each variation going deeper.

Repeatedly cycle back to practices that will foster desirable behaviors and hone important skills.

- ⇒ Emphasize empathy in learner-centered activities.
- ⇒ Have learners ask permission at the beginning of every real-play.
- ⇒ Make group and personal reflection a ritual associated with key transition points.
- ⇒ Intersperse reflective listening drills throughout the training.

Start and End with the Big Picture

Start by introducing the big picture of MI including the primary principles and behaviors.

Next break the principles and behaviors into parts to study, first in isolation and then more holistically. Integrate the union of the various aspects incrementally, bringing in increasingly challenging concepts and behaviors.

End again with the big picture.

Sequencing Algorithms

When deciding what order in which to present concepts, consider the following movements:

Simple	→	Complex				
Structured	→	Improvisational				
Personal	→	Interpersonal				
Practical	→	Theoretical				
Whole	→	Parts				
Quiet	→	Active				
Individual	→	Whole group	→	Dyad	→	Small Group

You can see the movements illustrated above in the sequencing framework MINTie David Rosengren suggests for introducing MI skills. I include my own additions and amendments in italics.

- ⇒ **Tell *and/or elicit*.** Brief didactic presentation or exercise designed to elicit what learners already know or have experienced. *The trainer can weave in MI-specific information at any point in the flow.*
- ⇒ **See.** Observe or recognize the skill in action. This may be by means of video clip or demonstration.
- ⇒ **Do in slow motion.** Often a writing task or a skill in isolation, typically done in a group situation.
- ⇒ **Perform.** Isolate skills and do them in real time. Learners are provided with structure in which to practice. Practice is immediately followed by feedback.
- ⇒ **Build.** Work from easier to more complex and chain more complicated skills together.
- ⇒ **Debrief.** Following the introduction of the skill, invite participants to identify key learnings.

Example: Opening Sequence

In the early stages of an introductory workshop, I work to devise a sequence that kicks off a learning process that is:

- ◆ Simple
- ◆ Structured
- ◆ Personal
- ◆ Practical
- ◆ Active
- ◆ Applicable to the individual

Whether a single or multi-day training event, my opening sequence might unfold as follows:

Warm-up. Tell MI-related story to pique curiosity.



Elicit. Inquire about previous exposure to MI.

What have you heard about MI?



Offer. Relate simple, concise definition of MI. MI-specific information and key principles may be embedded in offerings throughout the sequence, as appropriate.



Reflect. Learners make personal assessment (e.g., regarding comfort in role-playing, confidence in activating motivation for change).



Warm-up. Introduce kinesthetic links to OARS skills.



Elicit. Evoke learners own wisdom and skill in activating motivation for change (e.g., What works? What doesn't?).



Observe/Experience. Facilitate large group real-play that allows learners to personally experience the big picture of MI.



Practice. Set up structured real-play process (in dyads) so learners experience the spirit and client-centered communication style of MI.



Feedback. Guide partners in offering feedback to one another.



Debrief. Invite learners to share key learnings from the activity.



Reflect. Invite learners to silently reflect on key learnings.



WORK WITH A CO-TRAINER

It can be a great joy to co-facilitate, or “dance” with another trainer who is seasoned and willing to collaborate with you through an entire training.

While co-facilitating is fruitful and can allow more options than what you might present on your own, until and unless you find a training partner who you work with repeatedly, it will require more time and energy during the planning process.

Don't Let Your Dance Partner Go!

If you find someone with whom you gracefully collaborate, someone whose next “dance move” you come to intuit in advance, keep that person. The two of you have a lot of important work to do!

Joint Facilitation

Here are some ideas to keep in mind when co-facilitating.

Pre-Training Co-Facilitation

- ⇒ Clarify your understanding of co-facilitation up front, before the collaboration begins. This is especially important prior to teaming up for the first time. Discuss:
 - ◆ Your respective facilitation styles
 - ◆ How you work best
 - ◆ Your strengths and weaknesses
 - ◆ Your expectations from each other.
- ⇒ Schedule ample time for planning.
- ⇒ Share the responsibilities of planning equally. Decide what each of your roles and responsibilities will be and who will do what during the workshop.
- ⇒ Plan how you'll interact during training.
- ⇒ Decide how to keep track of time.
- ⇒ Plan ways to give signals to one another when you have something to communicate (e.g., “Time is running out,” “There’s a question in the back,” or “I’ve got something to say.”)
- ⇒ Talk about whether and when it’s OK to interrupt.
- ⇒ Discuss comfort and structure for improvisational role-plays.

Co-Facilitating During Training

- ⇒ Share your intentions. Immediately prior to beginning, share you both personal intention and your intention for the team. What do you most want to work on during this workshop?
- ⇒ Work as a team. Present yourselves to the group as equals.

- ⇒ Communicate liberally. Check in with each other during breaks and make decisions about course correction and incorporating inspired innovations together.
- ⇒ Stand beside one another literally and figuratively. When your co-trainer is presenting or leading an activity, be fully attentive to what s/he or the group may need, without disrupting the process. Avoid the dynamic of one trainer standing while the other sits and observes.
- ⇒ Show you care. Honor time commitments. Support and affirm each other.

Post Training

- ⇒ De-brief. Meet immediately after the workshop to debrief. Discuss what worked well, and what could have been done differently.
- ⇒ Give each other feedback. Offer each other feedback based on an agreed-upon process.



GET ORGANIZED

Over the years as I've gone around teaching MI, just about every unexpected event and mini-calamity I could imagine has happened.

I've forgotten: my computer, memory stick, DVDs, cell phone, LCD projector, handouts, important clothing items, and toiletries.

I've experienced: computer crashes, burned out light bulbs, stolen DVDs, rental car accidents, canceled flights, delayed and lost luggage, unexpected parades, power outages, fire alarms, blizzards, tornadoes, earthquakes, lions roaring outside training room (for real!), America's Cup sailboats whipping past the training room windows and dengue fever.

In one unforgettable event, I arrived at the venue several hours early to set up and plan. When it came time to start the training, none of the forty registered participants had walked in the door. After wandering around the vacant facility, I went outside to find that I was surrounded by men standing on an adjacent hillside, pointing guns in my direction. I soon discovered that I was standing in the parking lot where Air Force One, President Obama's helicopter, was preparing to land.

Be Prepared

- ⇒ Expect and respect the unexpected.
- ⇒ Pack light.
- ⇒ Create a list of training and travel supplies. (Check it twice!)
- ⇒ Back up slides on a memory stick and/or in the Cloud.
- ⇒ Keep a pre-packed bag of training supplies.

Create a List of Training and Travel Supplies

Keep a training supply bag packed with the essentials, always ready to go.

- ◆ Power strip
- ◆ Extension cord
- ◆ Batteries for remote clicker
- ◆ Extra Light bulb for LCD projector
- ◆ Extra memory stick
- ◆ Timer
- ◆ Chart pad markers
- ◆ Colored dots
- ◆ Masking tape and drafting stickers
- ◆ Name badges
- ◆ Gum
- ◆ Breath mints
- ◆ Hard copy of Playbook lists
- ◆ Placard prompts (e.g., E-P-E; engage, focus, evoke, plan)
- ◆ *Motivational Interviewing, Third Edition*
- ◆ Altar / Training Tool Box containing:
 - ◆ rattle
 - ◆ bell
 - ◆ click sticks
 - ◆ pearls
 - ◆ light weight wooden oars

Organize Your Computer Files

The art to developing a training sequence involves planning a workshop that anticipates the needs of the learners yet leaves room for improvisation once you get to know your learners. But you need your materials, namely computer files, handy and organized in order to improvise.

I sometimes think of myself as a kind of football coach and these files as my **MI Training Playbook**. Before the training I draw up a general game plan and decide on the first series of plays. As the training proceeds, I use my intuition to guide which plays to choose from.

If your playbook is well-organized, you can spend the time during breaks selecting which slide sets, DVD clips, specific learning activities, and stories to share with the group in upcoming sections. It's a creative act, similar to the navigation of an actual motivational interview.

Include in your playbook:

Specific Slide Sets

Have slide sets that are tailored to address:

- ◆ Particular professional groups (health care professionals, criminal justice workers, dieticians)
- ◆ Various client populations (adolescents, homeless)
- ◆ Target behaviors (diabetes management, alcohol/drug use, smoking)

Generic Slide Sets

These slide sets consist of:

- ◆ Instructions for various exercises
- ◆ Examples of e-p-e scenarios
- ◆ Quotations
- ◆ Cartoons
- ◆ Images
- ◆ Song lyrics

Video Clips

Categorize downloaded video clips by:

- ◆ Clinical examples
- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ General inspiration

Lists

Keep lists of:

- ◆ DVDs in your possession
- ◆ Exercises and activities
- ◆ Clinical stories



PREPARE HANDOUT PACKETS

Though I incorporate measures to “go green” in training events, it helps learners to have a physical packet of handouts. The packet provides a place for learners to record and review reflections and key learnings. It also aids those whose learning styles favor the visual or kinesthetic.

The packet is set up in a binder, with blank spaces on many pages for learner input. **Appendix I** provides examples of handouts you might include in a packet.

- ◆ **Assessment of Core Motivational Interviewing Concepts.** This worksheet is to be used pre- and post-training for assessing progress in learning MI. Learners are encouraged post-training—to place the assessment in a prominent place to serve as a reminder of MI and personal progress in developing proficiency.
- ◆ **OARS Page.** Provides space for learners to write down three types of open-ended questions to incorporate in their work: strength-based, change talk focused, disarming.
- ◆ **Resistance (sustain talk / discord) Page.** Bottom of page contains a “lock box” in which learners can place an example of a “fixin behavior” they’d like to eliminate from their current interviewing practice.
- ◆ **Large Group Interactive Real-play Roadmap and Worksheet.** Includes a circle chart for identify a target behavior, 0-10 scale for assessing readiness for change, a two-column table for exploring ambivalence, and space for identifying a next step. The roadmap is a separate page that the interviewer can refer to as he or she is being guided through the real-play. (See **Appendix F.**)
- ◆ **Touchstone Cards.** Learners enjoy receiving "touchstone cards." These are four-by-six reference cards learners can keep handy as a reminder of key MI skills and principles. The classic card is specific to OARS with corresponding kinesthetic signals. Depending on the type or level of training, I will typically include others. Pictured below are examples of touchstone cards.

O.A.R.S

O: Asks mostly open-ended questions (**ahh**)

A: Affirms strengths, abilities & efforts (**clap**)

R: Listens reflectively (**snap**)

S: Summarizes the big picture—
highlighting change talk! (**Pat**)

Hang Ten

1. **MI is also a style for training.**
2. **Model, Model, Model.**
3. **End & begin with practice. Get started with a splash; end with a long ride.**
4. **Keep it simple with structured activities**
5. **Integrate mini preludes—the space between the waves**
6. **The trainer is the most powerful visual aid. Ride with style!**
7. **The wisdom is in the room.**
8. **Integrate kinesthetic learning strategies.**
9. **Expect and respect the unexpected. Don't freak after a pearl.**
10. **Make it multi-modal. Use a variety of learning modalities.**

MI Plateaus

- **Letting go of the expert role**
- **Using complex reflections**
- **Missed opportunities**
- **Insufficient direction**
- **Opposing resistance**
- **Failing to move on to planning**
- **Not consolidating commitment**
- **Not letting go of MI**

Steps: Offering Feedback

Step 1: Ask permission

"Are you open to receiving my feedback?"

Step 2: Explore the positive

"What went well?"

Step 3: Agree and/or summarize, and offer

"I agree with..., and you additionally did a great job of..."

Step 4: Explore areas of improvement

"As you think about how it went, what do you think you might do differently next time?"

Step 5: Agree and/or summarize, and offer

"I agree with... I also noticed... next time you might consider..."

Step 6: Explore personal reflections

"What do think about my feedback/observations?"

"What are your key learning's?"

Mentoring in the spirit of MI

- ❖ Initial focus is on the mentee's strengths
- ❖ Mentee does most of the talking
- ❖ The mentee is the primary source in finding ideas, solutions, answers, wisdom, insights, skills, goals, motivations, and commitments
- ❖ Mentor tames the "righting reflex" (the desire to fix)
- ❖ Mentor rolls with resistance versus fighting it
- ❖ Mentor holds the reins on action planning until the mentee is ready
- ❖ Mentor demonstrates a communication style that is:
 - Warm & friendly
 - Collaborative
 - Empathic
 - Accepting
 - Positive & hopeful
 - Honoring of autonomy



KEEP PREPARING UNTIL TAKE-OFF

“Failing to prepare is like preparing to fail.”

Benjamin Franklin

Arrive at the training site at least thirty minutes early so you are ready and waiting for learners when they arrive.

Before Learners Arrive

- ⇒ Set up the room. Arrange the space for optimal learning and comfort.
- ⇒ Prepare a blank seating chart.
- ⇒ Set your intentions. What interpersonal qualities, internal state, behaviors, and/or experiences do you most want to bring into the learning environment (e.g., passion, playfulness, calm, clarity, brevity, humility)?
- ⇒ Fill up your water bottle or thermal cup.
- ⇒ Make one last bathroom run. (Zip up your zipper!)

As Learners Arrive

- ⇒ Greet them with a warm smile.
- ⇒ Fill in their names on your seating chart.

Finally

- ⇒ Take a deep breath, let go, and trust the process.

6 – DESIGNING & ENRICHING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

"A classroom that looks and feels good will encourage learning."

Julie Pelletier-Rutkowski, MS, RN
Certified Feng Shui Practitioner



Key Learnings

Set up the room to support learning.

Create focus hubs.

Use visuals.

Play music.

An intentionally-designed learning environment that is warm and visually pleasing enhances the experience of learning of MI. This chapter includes strategies for arranging the workshop space to create an optimal learning environment.



SET UP THE ROOM TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Sometimes referred to as “classroom feng shui,” intentionally positioning tables and chairs supports focus, comfort, and interaction between learners and trainer.

Seating

The Semi-Circle Arrangement (Fewer than 35 Learners)

A semi-circle arrangement works for groups of less than 30 to 35 people. This arrangement:

- ◆ Makes it easy for learners to see both the trainer and fellow learners
- ◆ Provides a dance floor-like space in which the trainer can freely move around the room
- ◆ Enables the trainer to interact with every learner in close range

Learning Pods (More than 35 Learners)

For larger groups, set up tables that seat six to eight people. This configuration:

- ◆ Supports small group work
- ◆ Allows avenues for the trainer and learners to easily move about the room, provided there’s ample space between tables

Trainer Tables and Stool

My preference is to be able to place the following pieces of furniture behind your central position:

- ◆ **Table 1** for your laptop, projector, speakers, and training altar (see Focus Hubs, below).
- ◆ **Table 2** for notes, handouts, and other resources you want to have within reach.
- ◆ **Light weight stool** that you can easily move around the room and sit on when appropriate (e.g. during demonstrations, when configuring laptop for showing a video, when making adjustments to slides, when you need a break from standing)

Trainer Visibility

The trainer is ultimately the most important visual aide. Place yourself front and center in the learning space, with nothing between you and your learners. This strong position allows you to directly connect with everyone.

Avoid:

- ◆ Standing behind a podium or table
- ◆ Turning your back to the audience when talking, showing slides, referring to visuals, and writing on a chart pad



CREATE FOCUS HUBS

When I'm hosting my own training events, I prefer to rent space that allows for the tables to be arranged along the outer edges of the room.

These **focus hubs** provide a place for learners to access materials and to congregate during breaks.

Sign-in Hub

Located closest to the main entrance this hub contains:

- ◆ Daily sign-in sheet
- ◆ Name badges
- ◆ Resource binders
- ◆ Extra pens
- ◆ Facial tissues
- ◆ Maps and tourist information
- ◆ Bouquet of flesh flowers
- ◆ Gum
- ◆ Treats (e.g., chocolate kisses)

Resource Hub

Items on this table change according to the material covered during training and include MI resources such as:

- ◆ Books
- ◆ Relevant articles
- ◆ DVDs

Creativity Hub

This table makes available a variety of art supplies for general doodling and intentional projects such as:

- ◆ Creating name plates
- ◆ Decorating wooden OARS
- ◆ Creating "pearl" or "keeper" buckets

Tea and Water Hub

Also known as “the watering hole,” this hub is where learners are most often found during breaks. For simplicity, I provide water and variety of teas.

For coffee drinkers, there are usually several nearby locations for purchasing coffee just the way they want it. (After receiving a number of verbal and written complaints about the quality of the coffee, I decided to let it go.)

MI Altar

The altar is the trainer’s tool box and becomes an important visual focus point for learners. The altar goes on one of the two tables positioned immediately behind the trainer’s central position. In addition to miscellaneous training tools such as a timer and remote clicker, the MI altar is reserved for metaphoric props such as:

- ◆ String of pearls
- ◆ Paint brush and scraper
- ◆ Wooden OAR
- ◆ Bouquet of flowers
- ◆ Sound makers (e.g., rattle, bell)



Develop Power Point Grace With Your Remote

Among the most constructive pieces of feedback I've received on a post-training evaluation, one point had to do with the remote clicker: "Consistently use your clicker for slides; know it like the back of your hand. It was distracting when you sometimes fumbled with the clicker or you randomly went to your computer to progress the slides manually."

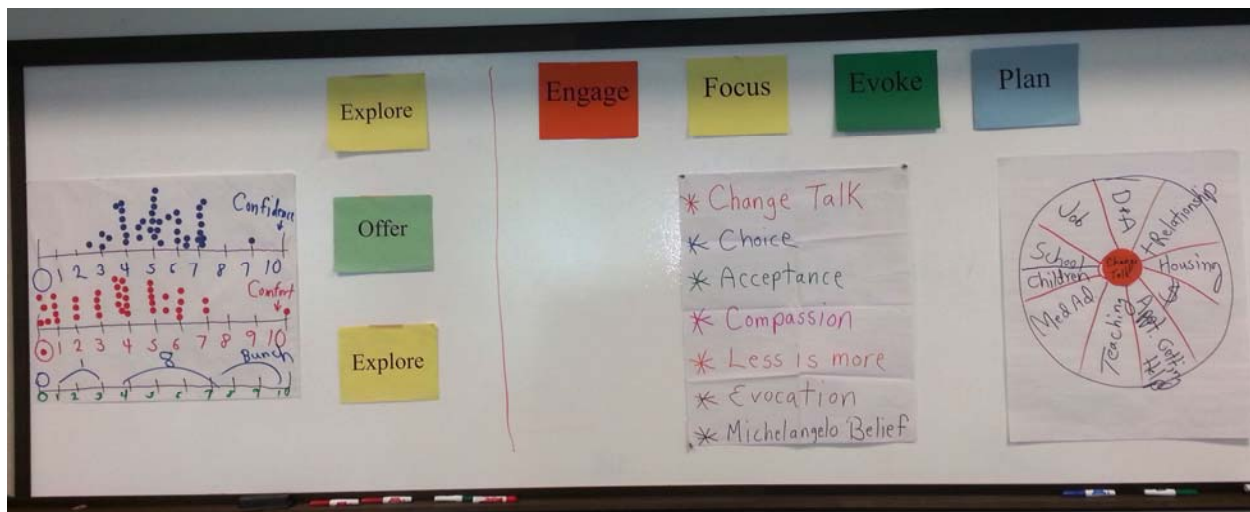
After lots of practice, my clicker is now part of my hand. I use it unconsciously and no longer move back and forth between my central position and computer.



USE VISUALS

Visual aids can serve to:

- ◆ Support longer-lasting recall of important MI concepts
- ◆ Illustrate progress and gains
- ◆ Assist the trainer to keep the flow of the training
- ◆ Reassure learners they've been heard
- ◆ Enhance personal connections



MI Messages

As shown in the figure above, I like to hang poster boards across the front wall of the learning space with messages that I want to refer to repeatedly during the course of training, such as Explore, Offer, Explore (a variation of Elicit, Provide, Elicit), Engage, Focus, Evoke, Plan. This type of steady visual reference helps learners retain important MI concepts.

Project Quotations During Breaks

“When we listen, they talk, and when they talk, they discover.”

Suzanne Murphy, MINTie

As discussed in Chapter 4 under the section “Fit Breaks into the Training Plan,” build up a slide file of quotations that you can display during breaks and embed at transitions during slide presentations.

These quotations can serve to prompt thought and discussion during breaks. You can also use them to segue to a new topic or activity.

Display Assessment Charts

- ⇒ Set up two 0-10 scales on large chart paper, and label them as follows:
 - ◆ Confidence in Activating Clients’ Inner Motivation for Change
 - ◆ Comfort in Participating Role Play Activities
- ⇒ At the beginning of training, invite participants to place a specific colored dot above the number that corresponds to their current confidence in activating clients’ inner motivation for change and a different colored dot above the number that corresponds to their comfort in participating in role-play activities.
- ⇒ These two scales subsequently become reference points for potential real-play interviews between trainer and learners.
- ⇒ Have learners reassess their levels at the end of training, marking their numbers with a new set of colored dots.

This visual display in the overall shift in the confidence level of the group at the end of training sets the stage for a discussion about how people gained confidence.

Set Up a Bike Rack Chart Pad

As discussed in Chapter 4 under “Allow Ample Time to Respond to Questions and Concerns,” it is important to have a visible, designated place to park learners’ questions for future consideration. This visual validates learners’ concerns and provides reassurance that what they bring forward will eventually be treated.

Use Name Plates to Connect with Learners

Addressing each learner by his or her first name helps to foster a personal connection, but it is difficult to read name badges from a distance. Name plates with names printed boldly on both sides makes it easy for both the trainer and fellow participants to read participants’ names from every direction.

The Creativity Hub, discussed above, makes available art supplies that learners can use during breaks to create their own unique name plate.



PLAY MUSIC

"Music is the universal language of mankind."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Music has the potential to honor the uniqueness of every learning group and can be woven into the learning environment in a variety of ways. Consider playing certain types of music at particular times, such as listed in the chart below.

Purpose	Time	Suggestions
Mood-setting Transition signal	As learners arrive During breaks	Instrumental: harp, guitar Classical Jazz Turn up the volume momentarily just before re-starting session. Then follow with your predetermined auditory signal (such as a bell).
Energizing	As learners leave Mid-afternoon lulls During intentional movement breaks	Classic Rock Hip Hop Reggae Rhythm & Blues
Relaxing Support focus and mindful presence	Prior to activity	New Age Indian Kirtan Native American Flute
Stage-setting	Prior to specific activity	Songs with lyrics adapted to specific activity
Group cohesion	Conclusion of training	Songs with lyrics changed to celebrate MI learning. (See "OARS: The MI Song" in Chapter 4.)

Choose Music to Fit the Group

The big question with music is ultimately one of selection. I like to develop a playlist that fits the region, culture, or demographics of group.

Sample Regional Play Lists

Fort Wayne

When I presented at the MINT Forum in Ft Wayne, I developed a play list heavy with selections from native sons of Indiana including Michael Jackson and John Cougar Mellencamp.

San Francisco

When training in my home city of San Francisco, the play list is a potpourri of selections spanning the heyday of San Francisco music in the 60s and 70s.

Group Input

If I'm not sure of what music to play, and I'm going to be working with a group for extended period of time, I sometimes will ask the group to tell me what music would fit.

Songs of the Times

In early 2014 I played the song "Let it Go" from the Disney movie, *Frozen*, for several events. I set the stage for playing "Let it Go" by talking about how my 6-year old daughter has been singing the song incessantly around the house, and how "Let it Go" links well with an important principle of MI:

In practicing MI consciously, you have to be aware of your personal investments, emotional attachments to clients making change. And, in the end, you have to let it go—you have to accept and respect clients' decisions about change, no matter how difficult that might be.

Using Music in Trainings: Janice Joplin Role-Play

When training in San Francisco, I integrate several Janis Joplin songs. I play "Piece of my Heart" as I project on screen an imagined dialogue loaded with examples of MI-adherent behaviors, complex reflections, and subsequent client change talk between Janice and a social worker. After several minutes of playing the song (inviting learners to sing along if they like!), I slowly fade the volume as two participants playing the roles of Janice and social worker begin their interview, each character reading their lines off the screen.

7 – OPENING THE TRAINING

“You never get a second chance to make a good impression.”

Will Rogers



Key Learnings

Know your opening lines.
Deliver a multi-modal opening sequence.
Wait on introductions.

Just as what we say and do in the first few moments of a motivational interview is critical for establishing trust, safety, and engagement, what the MI trainer does in the first few moments of training is essential for engaging with the group.



KNOW YOUR OPENING LINES

Invest in the beginning! Rehearse the first couple of minutes of your opening, in front of a mirror or while taking a walk. Lock your opening statement in your memory so that you are guaranteed to extend a warm welcome, make strong eye contact with as many learners as possible, and deliver your words with enthusiasm and passion.

Good morning! Good morning! Welcome! If we have not already met, my name is Steve Berg-Smith, and it's a huge honor to be in your presence and to have the opportunity to be your learning guide.

Over the next two days we're going to take a journey—a journey to begin a process of developing skillfulness in a very practical, common-sense, evidence-based approach for guiding people to make change called motivational interviewing, or MI for short.



DELIVER A MULTI-MODAL OPENING SEQUENCE

Get the rhythm and flow of training going by integrating a variety of multi-modal, multi-sensory learning approaches right from the start.

Use this opening sequence to:

- ◆ Model MI
- ◆ Establish learners' trust
- ◆ Provide a sense of safety
- ◆ Engage learners
- ◆ Provide learners with the opportunity to experience and practice MI

Multi-modal elements for your opening sequence may include something as follows.

Brief Presentation

Define motivational interviewing.

Motivational interviewing is a person-centered, guiding method of communication and counseling to elicit and strengthen motivation for change.

A simpler definition of MI is: "It's about dancing, not wrestling."



Present Agenda

Review the day's schedule of activities, including breaks.

Here's our schedule for the day. We'll wrap up no later than 4:30pm; take one hour for lunch beginning about 12 noon; and take fifteen minute breaks mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Our mid-morning break will begin about 10:30ish. How does this sound?



Share Desired Outcomes

Present the outcomes on which you established the training.

Review both the Outcomes Related to Professional Development provided on the pre-training materials and hopes regarding the participants' personal development. (See "Focus on Outcomes" in Chapter 5: "Preparing for a Training Event.") Elicit group input.

[This] is what I hope you'll walk away with at the end of our time together. How does that sound?

What, if anything, are you really hoping to get out of this training?



Provide Group Guidelines

Group guidelines help to encourage learners to actively engage in the training and model the collaborative spirit of MI.

After introducing your guidelines, invite learners to identify additional guidelines for supporting a productive learning environment. Two guidelines I have found especially helpful are:

- ◆ Show Up
Be present. Come back from breaks on time and fully present, willing to share your voice. If you find your mind drifting, gently bring it back.

- ◆ Hold a "Beginner's Mind"
Suzuki Roshi, the iconic Zen teacher, said, "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few." The beginner's mind is open, quiet, curious, eager, non-judgmental, without preconceptions. The expert's mind is the know-it-all mind, the arrogant mind. Park your expertise in behavior change counseling and what you think you know about MI outside the door and enter this room with your

beginner's mind. If you choose to show up and hold a beginner's mind, the training will go faster and you'll get more out of it.

Additional guidelines to introduce might include:

- ◆ Respect confidentiality.
- ◆ Be brief when speaking.
- ◆ Listen carefully.



Assess Levels Of Confidence And Comfort

Invite learners to pinpoint their current level of both confidence in activating clients' inner motivation for change and comfort in participating in role play activities on the Assessment Charts displayed in the front of the room. (See "Display Assessment Charts" under "Visuals" in Chapter 5. Learners also have a copy of these scales in their handout packets to mark.

On a scale of 0 to 10, how confident are you in your ability to activate another person's inner motivation to make change. A zero equals: I have no confidence. A ten equals, I've never met anyone I haven't been able to motivate.

This training is not a sit-down affair of listening and watching slides, but very hands-on. The plan is to do a lot of role-playing. Before I invite you to role-play, I'd like to get a sense of how you feel about it. On a scale of 0 to 10, how comfortable are you with the idea of participating in role-plays? A zero equals I hate it. A ten equals I can't think of anything I'd rather be doing.

After marking the numbers in your handout, please come up and mark the scales with these colored dots.



Introduce Kinesthetic Links

Demonstrate kinesthetic links ("MI Sign Language") to OARS behaviors as learners return to their seats.

Clap clap, snap snap, pat, pat, ahhh...If you're wondering what I'm doing, it's a practice to build sensory memory. In motivational interviewing, we constantly employ four communication skills summarized by the acronym OARS: Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reflective listening statements, Summaries. Linking each OARS skill with a different sound and movement helps to create a sensory memory.

Ahhh is for Open-ended questions.

Claps are for Affirmations.

Snaps are for Reflective listening statements.

Pats are for Summaries.

We'll scramble the rhythm like this: clap clap, snap snap, pat pat, ahhh. During the course of training we'll repeatedly return to this rhythm.



Brainstorming Exercise: What Works? What Doesn't?

Present an imaginary client and invite learners to record in their handout packet their ideas for what might work in guiding the client towards change.

Slide 1: "MI is making known what we already know."

In their hearts, most people already know MI.

Slide 2: Client characteristics, such as: 45-year old male, unemployed, homeless, struggles with manic depression, poor medication adherence, drinks approximately 40 standards of alcohol...

To demonstrate this, here's a client. Imagine that you're going to meet with him for ten minutes. Write down on your handout, what, during that time, would you say and do to encourage him to talk with you about this life and making change?

Ring bell.

*Now write down what, during the ten minute meeting, all of the things you could imagine yourself saying and doing that would **not** work. What would make him more resistant to change?*

Ring bell.

Thank you for your willingness to brainstorm. We'll return to this later this morning.



Tell Cliffhanger Story

Relate the first part of a story that demonstrates the potency of MI.

Here's a story about my first taste of the potency of motivational interviewing...

(See Chapter 4: "Steve's Go-To Cliffhanger Story: 'A Finger In My Chest.'")



Conduct A Group Interview

Returning to earlier assessment, invite participants to talk about their level of comfort in participating in role play activities. Use the Assessment Chart as a guide.

Before we move on, let's spend a few minutes talking about your comfort in role-playing. First of all, thank you for your honesty. You've provided me with helpful information. Let's hear from a few of you about the level of comfort you pinpointed. Let's begin with someone who picked a 4, 5, 6, or 7.



Brief Presentation

Present MI as an art form that takes time and practice to master.

Slide: Photo of Bill and Steve.

This is a photo of Bill Miller and Steve Rollnick, co-authors of the classic books on motivational interviewing. About MI, Bill and Steve say, "In some ways MI is simple, but mastering it is neither quick nor easy." Bill continues, "As with other complex skills, gaining proficiency in MI is a lifelong process."



Initiate REAL Real-Play (Part 1)

Introduce the principle of Get REAL (see Chapter 2). Then invite participants to pair up and practice interviewing. Before proceeding with activity, emphasize **choice**, as below.

An important step in the lifelong journey of learning MI is to Get REAL with folks...

To warm up our Get REAL muscles, we might do a bit of interviewing with a partner.



Emphasize Choice To Establish Trust And Safety

As a general guideline, workshop participants are more likely to learn MI when they are actively involved and engaged. And, of course, some individuals will prefer to sit on the sidelines and simply observe. In the spirit of MI, always honor the different ways of learning by emphasizing choice.

Let learners voice their mixed feelings about participating in activities such as role-plays early on in the training. You can use this ambivalence as a platform from which to model MI, in turn helping to build and strengthen your learners' internal motivation to fully participate in the learning process.

I want to make it very clear that nothing in this training is mandatory or required. You are always in control of your degree of participation. I encourage you to participate fully. Most of you will get more out of this training by actively participating and you'll find the time goes faster. But some folks learn better by watching or just don't feel comfortable participating. I will completely honor how much you choose to participate. It's always your choice!



Continue REAL Real-Play (Part 2)

Invite learners to proceed with real-play interview.

What do you love about your work?



Wait on Introductions

For many, the simple act of speaking before a new group is anxiety-producing. Providing learners ample time to become familiar with the style of the trainer and to settle into the rhythm and flow of the training process supports safety and comfort along with greater attention and presence during introductions.

In multi-day events, I typically wait until after the morning break or immediately prior to lunch before inviting learners to introduce themselves.

Guide the Introductions

Provide clear guidelines for introductions. Show the instructions on a slide and explain them verbally as well.

If you incorporate something related to MI in the process you provide a nice segue following the introductions to speak further about the strength-based orientation of MI, and how a primary process of MI is calling forth the strengths, resiliency, and capabilities of the client.

Below is an example of how I might use elicit-provide-elicited to guide introductions.

Example: Steady Steve's E-P-E Model for Introductions

Instructions

What I have in mind is to go around the room and introduce ourselves. Tell us: your first name (or what you like to be called), where you live, and what do you do in your work. Then give us a word that begins with the same first letter as your first name that captures one of your personal strengths, something that makes you effective in your work. For example, my word is steady: Steady Steve.

You don't have to do introduce yourself if you don't want to. You can pass. And in the spirit of Less is More, strive to introduce yourself in twenty seconds or less.

Participants are given a moment to think of their word. I also project a slide with examples. (See Miller and Rollnick, *Motivational Interviewing, Second Edition*, p. 115, Box 9.1.) Further, I offer to guide anyone who is interested in finding a word, using a strategy from motivational interviewing.

How does that sound? Questions? Comments? Concerns? All right, who would like to start?

MI Demonstration

When someone asks for help finding a word, I guide them as follows:

Elicit

What ideas, if any, do you have?

Ask permission

Would you be open to some additional ideas from the group?

Provide

Group, what ideas do you have for [Wanda], making sure we bring forward two, three, and no more than four possibilities? We want to make sure we offer choices, but at same time not overwhelm her with possibilities.

Elicit

Wanda, what do you think of these ideas? Is there one in particular that rings your bell?

8 – CLOSING THE TRAINING

“Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end; then stop.”

The King

Alice in Wonderland



Key Learnings

End with a long ride.

The conclusion of an MI training is an important time. Use it to:

- ◆ Review and consolidate **key learnings**
- ◆ Establish learners' intentions for **continuing practice and integration of MI** into their work life
- ◆ Provide a sense of **closure** to the training



End with a Long Ride

Allow plenty of time for a closing sequence. Give yourself approximately 90 minutes.

Include a Final Real-Play Activity

Set up a dyad or triad real-play to allow learners to integrate all the pieces of MI they've been practicing.



Hand Out Course Evaluations

Hand out course evaluations **well before the end**, at least twenty minutes before the official close of the training so learners will have plenty of time to provide thoughtful feedback.

Let learners know that after they complete of the evaluations the training period will continue for a little longer.



Integrate a "Working Break"

After the final real-play, invite listeners to complete several tasks in silence over a period of 15 to 20 minutes. Tasks may include:

- ◆ Complete Post-MI Assessment
- ◆ Identify key learnings
- ◆ Write up course evaluation



Set up a Consolidation Activity

Include a key learning moment such as a partner interview or group project. (See "Include a Consolidation Activity" in Chapter 4.)



Review Confidence Assessments

Guide a discussion of changes between pre- and post-training levels of confidence in activating clients' inner motivation for change.



Conclude Cliffhanger Story

Finish the cliffhanger story begun in the opening sequence.



Extend Gratitude, Voice Confidence

Thank learners for their participation and hard work. Let everyone know that with an ongoing commitment to continued practice they can become proficient in motivational interviewing.



Final Act

Make the end of the training session memorable.

Steve's Final Act

I like to close with the message, *If you don't use it, you lose it!* and then invite learners to sing OARS: The MI Song together. (See Chapter 4 under "Make Time for Reflection and Consolidation.")

9 – POST-TRAINING REFLECTION

“Everything has to come to an end, sometime.”

Frank Baum

The Marvelous Land of Oz



Key Learnings

Take time to reflect, review, clean up, debrief.

Build in self-care.

Rest before reviewing feedback.

The close of an MI training event is not really the end. For the trainer it is the time to reflect on key learnings and to begin preparing for the next training event.



TAKE TIME TO REFLECT, REVIEW, CLEAN UP, DEBRIEF

Immediately post training, ideally within the first hour when your memory is sharp, take time to:

Reflect

Writing down key learnings. Ask yourself:

- ◆ What worked?
- ◆ What didn't work?
- ◆ If I could rewind and do things over, what would I do differently?

Use the Motivational Interviewing Trainer Assessment (MITA) to help guide your personal critique. (See **Appendix A**.)

Review the Training Chronology

This activity is helpful for preparing future trainings, especially if you'll be working with the same group. Write out the actual learning sequence as it took place during the workshop. Be sure to include stories told and video clips shown.

Clean Up and Re-Organize Slides

If during the training you improvised, adjusting slide presentations to fit the needs of the particular group, now is a good time to re-organize them so they match what you have in your MI Playbook. (See under "Get Organized" in Chapter 5.)

Debrief with Your Co-Trainer

If you worked with a co-trainer, discuss what worked well and what could have been done differently. Offer each other feedback based on an agreed-upon process.



BUILD IN SELF-CARE

Be kind to yourself. Do what you need to do to replenish and take care of yourself.

Steve's Self-Care Strategy

After a training event I try to take a meandering walk by myself followed by a healthy dinner and an early bed time.



REST BEFORE REVIEWING FEEDBACK

Never review learners' evaluations immediately after a training workshop. Wait a day or two.

Physically and emotionally exhausted, the trainer is in no position to consider evaluations during the few hours after a training event. During this vulnerable time just one or two negative comments can distort your ability to acknowledge overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Remind yourself that you worked hard. Take care of yourself, and wait until you are ready.

Embrace Learners' Feedback

When you are ready, take time to sit down and carefully read through every evaluation, as difficult as it may be.

There's much to learn from feedback. Use it to fine-tune your training style and enhance your delivery of future MI trainings.

IN CONCLUSION...

“The skills and qualities of MI can be demonstrated by the very manner in which you deal with your learners.”

Miller & Rollnick

Develop Your Own Unique Style

There is a great need for skilled MI trainers who can convey MI as the sophisticated, nuanced art form that it is. As the practice of motivational interviewing extends throughout the world, more people are learning MI, and more people are teaching it. But too often trainings are set in rigid curricula that reduce MI to a series of overly-simplified techniques.

Just as no two guides will take you through the forest and call attention to the flora and fauna in the same way, no two people approach their training in exactly the same way—nor should they. After all, we don't all practice MI the same way. Our clients are unique individuals. And so our we: as practitioners and trainers we each bring to the table our own personalities, interpersonal styles, experiences, and areas of expertise.

The more you train, the more comfortable you'll become, and with the comfort, you may find yourself more willing to try out new ideas that at first may have felt too risky. In addition, you may find yourself bringing forth aspects of your personality that you've held in reserve and with this release, a deepening connection with your learners. This type of progression will happen naturally when you make it a habit to observe and assess yourself and to reflect on your key learnings at the end of each training. It will happen when you approach each training with "the beginner's mind," and with a willingness to learn from your learners.

Putting on a training takes effort and energy. It's a good feeling when, at the end of a training, you look forward to the next one. Recharging with self-care and reflection are key to maintaining such an outlook. Take care of yourself the same way you'd like others to take care of themselves.

To Teach the Art of Motivational Interviewing Is To Teach the Art of Helpfulness

My final word is an affirmation to MINTies everywhere. Your effort to teach people the art of motivational interviewing contributes to what Bill and Steve refer to as “the humanization of services.”

May your journey be filled with meaningful lessons and the satisfaction of knowing you are making a difference.

APPENDICES

Appendix A — Motivational Interviewing Trainer Assessment (MITA)

Appendix B — Feedback Summary

Appendix C — Metaphors in Miller and Rollnick, *Motivational Interviewing*, Third Edition

Appendix D — The Process of MI (Structured Real-Play Activity)

Appendix E — Interactive Group Real Play: Instructions

Appendix F — Interactive Group Real Play: Conversation Flow and Worksheet

Appendix G — Simple Tracking Tool

Appendix H — Six Common Objections Trainees Voice About Motivational Interviewing:
Suggested Responses.

Appendix I — Sample Handouts

- Assessment of Core MI Concepts

- OARS Handout

- Resistance (sustain talk/discord) Handout

Motivational Interviewing Trainer Assessment (MITA)

Global Ratings

Evocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws out learners wisdom, insight, clarity, understanding, opinions, creativity, answers, solutions, goals, commitments & motivations 	1	2	3	4	5
		Low				High
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows active & sincere interest in understanding needs & perspective of learners • Consistently uses artful reflective listening 	1	2	3	4	5
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors learners choice in participation; and in learning & using MI 	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of instruction for activity is clear, articulate, and concise 	1	2	3	4	5
Interactive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary focus is on active involvement: practicing MI 	1	2	3	4	5
Rolls with trainee resistance (<i>discord & sustain talk</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerates and accepts learners' disagreement, ambivalence, and preferences for other approaches 	1	2	3	4	5
Multi-modal learning approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a variety of multi-sensory, whole-brained learning approaches 	1	2	3	4	5
Accurate and up-to-date MI information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly knows MI • Accurately can explain key concepts and processes of MI 	1	2	3	4	5
Modeling; and Demonstrating MI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly models MI • Uses OARS throughout training process • Dances with learners! 	1	2	3	4	5
Rhythm & Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps the learning moving • Steady pace; up-beat tempo 	1	2	3	4	5
Debriefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates a debriefing process into all activities • Links key MI concepts into debriefing process 	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequencing of learning activities is strategically planned to optimize MI learning 	1	2	3	4	5
Overall: MI as a style for training (<i>"Teaching MI is like doing it"</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates MI training consistent with MI practice 	1	2	3	4	5

Facilitation Style

Eye Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains appropriate eye contact with all learners 	1 Low	2	3	4	5 High
Gestures & movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smiles often Moves with purpose Gestures naturally & freely Expression consistent & congruent with message 	1	2	3	4	5
Voice tone/volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks slowly and clearly Varies voice volume to emphasize key messages 	1	2	3	4	5
Pacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pauses to emphasize important points and to create transitions 	1	2	3	4	5
Enthusiasm & humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passionate about MI Positive, up-beat, affirmative Levity: does not take oneself too seriously 	1	2	3	4	5
Time Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps to allotted time Sets a time frame that's short enough to keep the energy up, but long enough for learning 	1	2	3	4	5
Use of A/V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gracefully navigates the integration of A/V with MI learning 	1	2	3	4	5
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusts training time and/or agenda based on emerging learner needs or feedback 	1	2	3	4	5

Behavior Counts

Sharing Information			
Setting agenda Setting up and managing activity			
Debriefing Activity			
Offering Feedback			
Modeling; Demonstrating MI			
Responding to learner questions			
Telling a story, anecdote			
Using multi-media			

Question	Closed Question		
	Open Question		
Reflect	Simple		
	Complex		
Affirm			
Emphasize Control			
Ask permission			
MI Non-Adherent	Advise, confront, direct		

Multi-Modal Learning Approaches

Feedback Summary

Date:

Trainer:

Mentor:

Strengths:

Areas for Improvement:

Next Step(s)

Future Support

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Metaphors in Motivational Interviewing

“In all aspects of life ... we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor.”

Lakoff and Johnson, *The Metaphors We Live By*

MINTie Mindy Hohman compiled the following metaphors from Miller and Rollnick, *Motivational Interviewing*, Third Edition.

Agenda Mapping

Agenda mapping is like...examining a map at the outset of a journey. (p. 106)

This approach [agenda mapping] is like looking at a map and seeing the places you might go, perhaps like two people on a sailboat slowing down for a moment to agree on a new course before catching the wind again. (p. 106)

If the client’s life is like a forest, agenda mapping involves soaring over it for a moment with the perspective of an eagle. (p. 107)

Agenda mapping can be...a matter of listening to the client’s story and puzzling together about a route out of the forest...where you may follow various streams to map the terrain (p. 116)

Ambivalence

Ambivalence is a bit like having a committee inside your mind, with members who disagree on the proper course of action. (p. 7)

Change Talk

The smallest glimmer of change talk may be a coal that if given some air will start to glow, becoming the fuel of change. (p. 103)

Change talk is a bit like walking up one side of a hill and down another. (p. 163)

Mobilizing change talk...is language on the far side of the ambivalence hill...(p. 285)

You continue to explore the forest of change, moving from tree to tree in a reasonably straight line. Beneath the surface, seeds are germinating. (p. 289)

Discord

Discord is like fire (or at least smoke) in the therapeutic relationship. (p. 197)

Just as a smoke alarm alerts you to a change in the air, tune your ear to hear signals of dissonance and recognize them as important. (p. 204)

Evocation

Evocation...is like...drawing water from a well. (p. 21)

Planning is the clutch that engages the engine of change talk. (p. 30)

A simple rhythm in MI is to ask an open question and then to reflect what the person says, perhaps two reflections per question, like a waltz. (p. 63)

Sometimes it moves quickly, but engaging, focusing, and evoking can be a slow step-by-step process like snowshoeing up the side of a mountain. The progress may be steady, but it feels effortful, there are likely to be a few backslides, and you have to pay attention to where you are going. (p. 257)

Feedback

Practice without feedback...is like...golfing in pitch-black darkness. (p. 59)

Feedback is fundamental...It is difficult to learn archery in the dark. (p. 323)

Focus

The focus is a light on the horizon toward which you keep moving. (p. 99)

The interviewer is keeping the whole picture in focus (eagle view) rather than zooming down to a particular task (mouse view). (p. 116)

Zooming in...is like pushing the plus (+) button to zoom in and get a better look at a particular area. (p. 108)

Learning MI & Feedback

Learning MI is like learning to fly an airplane...it is an on-going process and more than knowledge is involved. (p. 322)

Low-quality MI practice might be likened to half-doses of a vaccine or antibiotic: the right idea but insufficient strength. (p. 351)

An MI trainer should...be able to demonstrate it competently on the spot. It would be a rare violin teacher who cannot play the instrument competently. (p. 354).

Motivational Interviewing

MI is like dancing, moving together, in which you offer gentle guidance. (p. 103)

MI helps people out of the forest of ambivalence...MI helps them to keep moving from

tree to tree until at last they find their way out of the forest. (p. 166)

Early in an MI session the skill is often to discern a ray of change talk within the sustain talk, like spotting a lighthouse in a storm or detecting a signal within noise. It is not necessary to eliminate the storm or the noise, just follow the signal. (p. 178)

The partnership...conversation is a bit like sitting together on a sofa while the person pages through a life photo album. (p. 16)

It can feel comfortable to take the lead [in a conversation], confident in one's expertise, and it can also quite soon feel frustrating—a bit like pulling someone across the dance floor, trips and all. (p. 310)

MI is like improvisational theater. No two sessions run exactly the same way. (p. 211)

Can you do MI in a few minutes? It is in a way like asking, Can you play the piano for 5 minutes? (p. 343)

While we hold a parental fondness for this growing child that we have nurtured, and entertain some worries for its future development, we have come far enough together to stand back in wonderment and curiosity to see what will happen next. (p. 402)

Planning

Planning...is more like a downhill ski...there is still the danger of running into trees, taking the wrong trail, or even heading off a cliff, so you still have to pay attention...(p. 257)

Reflection

A simple reflection...is like an iceberg...it is limited to what shows above the water, the content that has actually been expressed, whereas a complex reflection makes a guess about what lies beneath the surface. (p. 58)

Righting Reflex

Be careful not to give in to the righting reflex...that will shut [clients] down like alligator jaws. (p. 249)

Getting up on your soapbox tends to leave people with a soapy taste in the mouth. (p. 249)

Summaries

Summaries are...strands that are woven together into a fabric, a single piece that contains all of their colors. (p. 69)

Summaries are like...seeing the forest instead of one tree at a time. (p. 69)

The Process of MI

1. Open the conversation (*Engage*)

- Warm, friendly greeting (smile!)
- Name
- Role
- Time
- Agenda
- Seek permission

2. Negotiate the Agenda (*Focus*)

- Show circle chart
- Read what's in each circle: *"In the circles are some topics we might talk about today. They include..."*
- Elicit choice: *"Which of these might you want to talk about today? Or is there something else?"*
- Encourage elaboration: *"How come you picked ___?"*

3. Ask open-ended question(s) (*Evoke*)

- *What concerns, if any, do you have about _____?*
- *If you made a change in this part of your life, how might it benefit you?*

4. Summarize

5. Ask about the next step ("*Test the water*")

- *What's next?*

6. Close the conversation

- **Show Appreciation:** *Thank you!*
- **Voice Confidence:** *I'm confident that if you decide to make a change in this part of your life, you'll find a way to do it!*

Interactive Group "Real-Play"

Purpose: To provide a large audience an initial introduction to motivational interviewing in a relatively brief interactive presentation (30-45 minutes).

Primary Goal: To catalyze interest in learning more about MI.

Secondary Goals: Exercise simultaneously allows trainer to:

- Model the spirit and basic skills/strategies/tools of MI
- Present bite-size pieces of didactic information ("key elements") related to MI
- Support learners in personally experiencing a simple motivational interview with a self-identified health behavior

Format: INTERACTIVE!

Structure: Trainer plays the role of helping professional/clinician—stops action at key transition points during the clinical encounter to provide simple explanation of skills/strategies/tools utilized. Learners play the role of patient/client—personally explore self-identified health behavior.

Approximate Time Required: 30-45 minutes

Materials:

- A. Slides and chart pad paper to display the following
 1. Key principles (e.g., Four Processes of MI)
 2. Key Transitions during "real-play"
- B. Participant handout—includes:
 1. Circle chart for setting the agenda. Circles contain: physical activity, physical activity, food, tobacco, play, safety, spirituality, relationships, sleep, alcohol, stress (also includes several blank circles)
 2. 0-10 scale for assessing readiness
 3. Box with line down the middle for exploring ambivalence
 4. Box for identifying "what-if any-next steps"
 5. Key MI references

Tips:

- Exercise requires finesse, willingness to be vulnerable, and the ability to shift in and out of different roles
- To signal the many transitions from the "real-play" to "stop-action," use a bell or shaker
- With a really large audience, use a microphone. This allows freedom of movement around the room, and at least one additional microphone for learner volunteers to speak into.
- Invite learners to save questions until completion of activity

Instructions:

- A. Opening comments: *"We have about 45 minutes together, and my plan is to give you a taste—an initial introduction to what a motivational interview might look and feel like."*
- B. Objectives: *"To be realistic about what we might accomplish, I'm hoping each of you walk away from this presentation with: 1). One new motivation-enhancing skill/strategy/tool; and 2) A desire to learn more about MI."*
- C. Set the stage: Begin by telling the audience that you're going to guide them through an *"interactive experience"* that will involve *"me stepping into the role of a helping professional, and you stepping into the role of my client/patient. And my plan is to have a conversation with you about your lifestyle, specifically the kinds of things you're currently doing or maybe not doing to keep yourself healthy and well. As we're having this conversation I'm going to model a number of different motivation-enhancing tools and strategies, and at key transition moments step out of my role as the helping professional and offering a brief explanation of what I've just demonstrated. You will know I'm stepping in and out of role when I shake this rattle. To facilitate this conversation, I'm going to refer to several counseling tools, which you'll find on your handout. How does sound? If you'd prefer not to participate and just watch that's absolutely fine. Let's get started..."*

Interactive real-play process:

- A. Open the encounter (**Engage**): Key elements to include: warm friendly greeting, name, role, agenda, time frame, and permission to have the conversation.

"Hello, my name is Steve Berg-Smith. It's nice to meet you. As you may already know, I work primarily as a health counselor, and my job is to work together with people in making decisions about what—if anything—they might want to modify or improve in their lifestyle as a way to support their overall health and wellbeing. We have about 20 minutes to meet, and I was hoping to do with our time is have a conversation with you about your health, specifically your lifestyle, and the kinds of things you're currently doing or maybe not doing to keep yourself healthy and well. How does that sound?" (Pause) "Raise your hand if this is OK with you?" For those of you who didn't raise your hands—thank you—thank you for letting me knowing where you're coming from. I respect that. During this time, as the rest of us are having this conversation I invite you to just observe or maybe do some of your own reading or writing. It's up to you."

[Stop Action] Step out of role. Offer brief explanation of key elements of opening the encounter—emphasize importance of supporting client autonomy and choice.

- B. Ask open-ended question(s) (**Engage**): Proceed by asking an open-ended question(s). Model OARS.

"To begin, I have several questions to ask you to help me get to know you better and begin to understand the different ways you go about keeping yourself healthy and well. During this time I may offer some of my own thoughts and perspective, but mostly I want to hear from you. My first question is, 'What are all of things you are currently doing to keep yourself healthy, not only now, but for the future?' Popcorn style, in just a few words, toss into the air what you're already doing?"

[Stop Action] Step out of role. Emphasize the importance of: 1) encouraging the client to speak—to talk more than the clinician by asking quality open-ended questions; and 2) initiating a conversation with a focus on strengths, versus focusing on problems, weaknesses or deficits.

- C. Negotiate the Agenda (**Focus**): Invite learners to look at circle chart. Walk through items in the bubbles. Encourage selection of a personal health behavior. Model OARS.

"In the circles are some of the most important things adults in our culture can do to support their overall health and wellbeing. What I'd like to do is briefly walk through each of these items, and as I'm doing this I think you'll notice that you're already some of these things. For example, there's the important of getting regular physical activity, the importance of not using tobacco products... (Continue through rest of circle). I want you to know that before we wrap up, if there are any topics in circles you want more information about, please let me know. Now, I have an important question to ask you, 'I'm wondering, you looking at all of the items in the circles, which one is shining at you like a neon light? In other words, which of these topics is the one that if you made a change in would most likely have the greatest impact on your overall health and well-being not only now but in the future?' Put a star next to the one you've just identified, or is there something else you're thinking of that you could write in one of the blank circles. Raise your hand if you picked one of the lifestyle areas already in a circle. Raise your hand if you identified something else. I wonder if one of you might be willing to share a few things about your reasons for picking what you did?"

(Stop Action) Step out of role. Introduce "agenda setting tool (circle chart)," and its role in presenting small pieces of information (less is more), focusing the encounter, and supporting choice.

[Real-play proceeds in similar manner with other transition steps]

- D. Assess readiness to change using the ruler. Ask scaling questions (**Evoke**). Model OARS
- E. Explore ambivalence ("*good things about keeping things the same*" and "*good things about making a change*") (**Evoke**). Model OARS
- F. Ask about the next step ("**Test the Waters**"/**Plan**) ("*Now that you've spent some time thinking about—and in some cases talking about—a part of your lifestyle that if you made a change in, where does this leave you? What are you thinking about doing or not doing? Where does this leave you? What's next?*")
- G. Close the encounter. Key elements to include: show appreciation, emphasize personal choice, voice confidence, link with resources, arrange for follow-up.

Debrief: Emphasize that "*what just happened is an example of a simple motivational interview.*" Entertain learner questions. Refer to references for those wanting to learn more.

Conversation Flow

1. Open the conversation — **Engage**

- Name
- Role
- Time
- Ask permission

2. Ask open-ended questions

- Invites client to do most of the talking
- Focus on strengths & successes

3. Negotiate the agenda — **Focus**

- Supports autonomy and choice
- Facilitates conversation
- Less is more!

4. Assess readiness to change— **Evoke**

- Supports tailoring
- Invites “change talk”

5. Explore mixed feelings

- Most common stage of change
- Needs to be addressed for sustained change
- Invites “change talk”

6. Ask about “next step” — **Plan**

- Assesses impact of conversation
- Perspective often shifts in the process!

7. Close the conversation

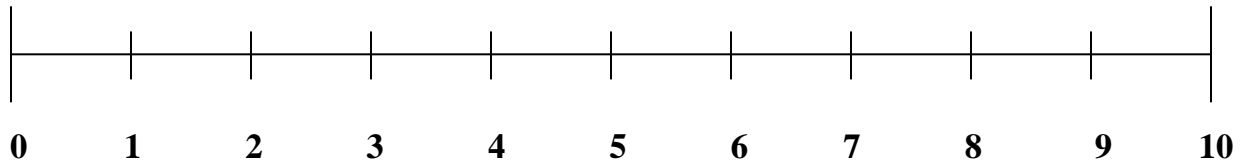
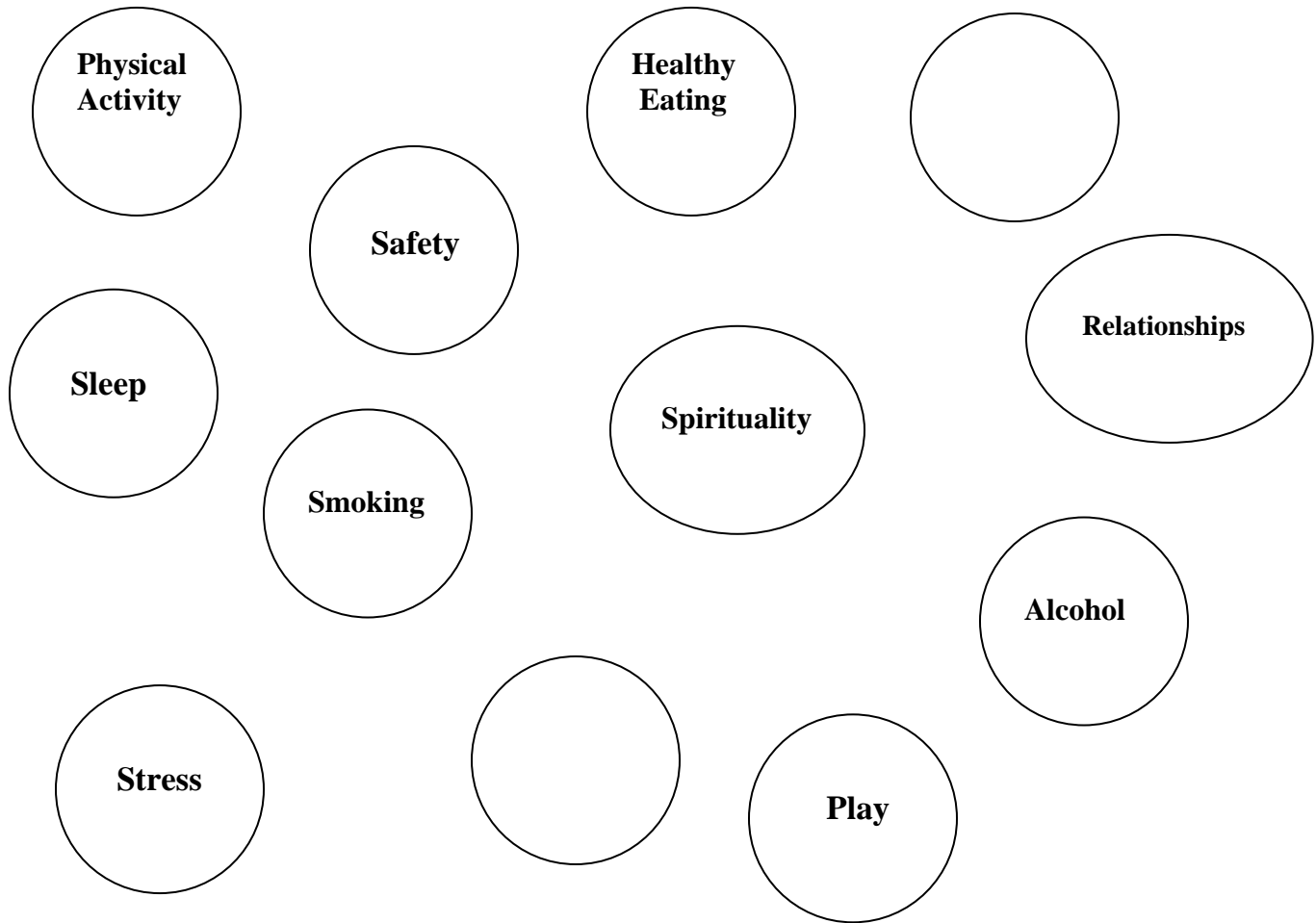
- Show appreciation
- If appropriate, offer recommendation(s)
- Voice Confidence

Invite and encourage
“change talk”

Ask

Listen

Summarize



<i>Next Step:</i>	



SIX COMMON OBJECTIONS TRAINEES VOICE ABOUT MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING: SUGGESTED RESPONSES

Carolina Yahne and Theresa Moyers
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Introduction

The process of teaching motivational interviewing to counselors and other health care providers who work with substance abusers has been gratifying and challenging. Some of our trainees express dissatisfaction with the new method we are teaching because they have been trained to use confrontational methods with their clients. Citing research about long term effectiveness may not impress them. As teachers, we hear “Yes, but...” to some of our research rationale: “Yes, but I only stopped drinking after my family really confronted me.” Or “Yes, but these clients are liars, and their denial must be broken down.”

Because we believe, based on outcome research, that motivational interviewing (MI) is effective with more clients than is confrontation, we will discuss six objections we frequently hear when we teach MI, and elaborate on methods we have used to refute those objections. In refuting the objections, we attempt to use the very principles we teach in motivational interviewing: rolling with resistance; avoiding argumentation; developing discrepancy; supporting self-efficacy; and expressing empathy.

We have identified six objections raised by our trainees. Their objections include the method’s seeming passivity, collaboration with denial, implication that change isn’t needed, time requirements, tendency to disturb colleagues, and cure-all dogma. This discussion is offered in a spirit of dialogue, hopefully evoking the most useful answers for all concerned.

Objection 1: The Technique is too passive.

This concern is most often expressed by therapists or screeners who have been used to using a more directive and active approach to client problems. The process of active listening, which is at the core of MI, may be experienced as insufficiently intense to move patients along in the change process.

Motivational interviewing is unlikely to be the only intervention used with a given client. It is one of many tools for the interviewer’s toolbox. There are many more active strategies, such as building refusal skills, which are more active, more directive, and appropriate when

clients have navigated through the ambivalence so typical of the earlier process of change. In fact, clients who have reached this point are likely to be frustrated by exactly the process of reflection and nondirectiveness which was useful in helping them resolve their initial ambivalence. They may need more direction from the therapist, who should be able to provide that as well. Motivational interviewing should be seen as a therapeutic tool specific to some, but not all, therapeutic situations.

Therapists who complain about the passivity of the motivational interviewing process may not appreciate the amount of effort necessary to engage in genuine active listening. MI requires the interviewer's (1) careful attention to what clients say, (2) internal visualizations of the spoken report, (3) formulation of a hypothesis concerning the problem, (4) articulation of that hypothesis in a neutral, non-inflammatory fashion, and (5) revision of the spoken hypothesis when it is off the mark from the client's perspective. Motivational interviewing is clearly an effortful endeavor on the part of the therapist and should not be confused with merely sitting passively and absorbing what a client is saying. Such an approach certainly would feel "too passive" to most therapists, and would be of dubious value to a highly ambivalent or distressed individual.

One student concerned about the passivity issue asked if MI was the same as Carl Rogers' (1957, 1959) client-centered approach. Our answer is yes and no. It is similar in that reflection is heavily relied upon during the precontemplation, contemplation, and determination states. It is different, of course, in that MI is directed to facilitate progressive movement through Prochaska and DiClemente stages of change, rather than being non-directive and totally client-centered.

Objection 2: This Technique collaborates with the user's denial.

At the heart of this concern is a fear that clients will rationalize our responses as permission to continue using substances. Using direct confrontation is seen as the most certain method for avoiding the pitfall, since it does not allow the client to be the least bit confused about the therapist's evaluation of the situation.

The goal of MI is also to raise a client's concern about the pattern of substance use. Ideally, clients leaving an MI session will be more aware of the consequences of their drug or alcohol use, and will be entertaining or selecting options for change. In this regard, both a

confrontational approach and a motivational interviewing approach share a similar concern: raising doubts about a destructive pattern of substance abuse.

It is an important research question which approach will profit clients, and under which circumstances. There is a growing body of data to indicate that MI is an effective intervention which leads to greater treatment compliance and more favorable outcome in a variety of clients including those found in the most challenging treatment settings. (Bien, Miller & Burroughs, 1993, Brown & Miller, 1993).

Such data may not be convincing to therapists who feel more “safe” using a confrontive approach. Some individuals may be so passionate about the problem of substance abuse that they will not be comfortable using any but the most extreme responses when they believe that such a problem is present. MI is probably not for them.

Objection 3: This technique supports the status quo.

For people in the helping professions, leaving space for the choice not to change may seem unacceptable. Not changing may seem unethical, illegal, and immoral when the behavior repeatedly hurts the user and others. Yet most helping professionals know that defensiveness is evoked when a client is approached with the attitude that he or she is bad, stupid, or destructive. The paradox of change most often happens when a client feels accepted as is, warts and all. Somehow, the process of acceptance allows the client the freedom to consider changing rather than defending it. Consequently, this third objection to Motivational Interviewing, that MI implies that not changing is OK, is true! Not changing is the client’s option and the client’s responsibility. That concept is extremely difficult to accept for professionals whose identity depends on helping people change behavior. We are asking the counselors to give up something they may consider to be a key component of their professional identity.

The paradox of change can be part of discussing this particular objection. We often let the counselors in our classes know that after the class is over, they always have the right to return to using their previous techniques. We ask them to simply try our method temporarily, for the duration of the class. We ask that our students learn and understand the concepts we are teaching. We do not insist they agree with the concepts. Some are willing to suspend judgment long enough to practice MI, without committing to using it later. In that way, hopefully, we practice what we preach: the students in our classes have the right not to change. Hopefully, they can allow that same right to their clients.

Objection 4: This technique takes too much time.

By employing the motivational interviewing strategy of evoking self-motivational statements from the client, rather than telling the client what is needed, counselors worry that hours will be wasted. Why not just cut to the chase and give directions? It's true, sometimes direct advice can be extremely clear and persuasive, especially when it is based on objective feedback such as lab results that the client can see in black and white. But to rely on such advice-giving as the primary approach is to miss eliciting the client's own best arguments for change.

Recently a student viewed the videotape of William R. Miller role-playing an MI session. "I'm too impatient" she said, "I think he's moving too slowly. Why does he let the client talk about so many different things? Can't he just tell the guy he's drinking too much?" Throughout the two-day course, the student continued to voice her impatience with the MI process. She felt we should hurry up and tell the client his "real problem." As the instructor, I used my best MI skills with her, reminding her she did not need to agree with the method, she simply needed to learn it; to add it to her tool box of skills so that one day she could pull it out with the appropriate client. She complied, and performed well on the exam. It remains to be seen if she chooses to use Motivational Interviewing with clients. What was effective for the other students in the course, was my willingness to accept her choice not to change, rather than spending precious class time arguing.

Motivational interviewing may take longer in the short run, but same time in the long run because the client has chosen a course of action based on her or his personal values. It may not even take longer in the short run, since time isn't wasted arguing and attempting to batter down defenses. Clients who experience the counselor's support of their self-efficacy and who feel empathic understanding from a counselor may waste less time because they are less likely to drop out of treatment prematurely or to relapse.

Objection 5: This technique will ruin credibility with colleagues.

All of us prefer to be liked and appreciated and included, so when colleagues disapprove of our methods, it feels threatening. If a counselor attempts to use MI and is perceived by colleagues as a dreamer, a bleeding heart, a touchy-feely type, or someone who allows herself to be hoodwinked by street-wise clients, the counselor risks losing credibility with peers.

When peers use confrontational methods criticize the MI approach, interviewers are encouraged to employ the “roll with resistance” strategy of the MI approach. “You may be right, confrontation may work better with some clients. I’m going to try MI for a while, and I hope you’ll support me, at least temporarily, until we can take a look at some follow-up data.” Critical colleagues will usually be willing to take a temporary wait-and-see approach.

If a counselor has to choose which kind of error to commit: have too much or too little faith in a client’s ability to change, we suggest erring on the optimistic side. Research has shown that a counselor’s belief in a client’s ability to change may be an essential facilitation factor in that change (Leake & King, 1977; Moyers & Love, 1994).

Objection 6: This technique is the right thing for all people at all times.

This statement indicates a lack of appreciation for the diversity of addicted individuals. There is no known approach which will work for all clients, and MI is not a panacea for hostile and ambivalent clients. At a Veteran’s Hospital, for example, one of us learned that the strategy of direct confrontation of substance use may build credibility of the therapist with certain types of clients. It may be part of a ritual about demanding honesty between former soldiers which facilitates frank discussion of problems.

Among those for whom such confrontation does not work, however, there is the very real possibility that the client will leave the interview less inclined to change, his resistance having been increased by the use of confrontation.

An MI strategy may be seen as a good place to begin with most clients, a strategy that will produce no further harm if it fails in eliciting client change. Clients may, of course, continue to use substances to their detriment, but are less likely to do so than if a confrontational approach is used (Miller & Rollnick, 1991).

Conclusion

Each of the six attitudinal barriers presented here could undermine the effective use of motivational interviewing. As trainers, we face such objections almost every time we present the MI approach to a new group of trainees. Careful thought and discussion about these barriers can lead to fuller understanding of the psychotherapist process in general, and of the skill of Motivational Interviewing in particular. Considering or implementing a change in interviewing strategy requires an informed skepticism on the part of the learner. Other factors required are an

ability to make choices about how a strategy is used; an explicit freedom to choose other methods as appropriate; an examination of the pros and cons of the MI technique; and a supportive atmosphere in which to try new behavior. To expect less would be to ignore the valuable lessons our clients, students, and trainees have taught us.

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Sample Handouts

- ◆ Core MI Concepts
- ◆ OARS
- ◆ Resistance (sustain talk/discord) Handout

Core Motivational Interviewing Concepts

	Low	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a communication/counseling STYLE that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm & friendly - Compassionate - Empathic (seeks to understand things from the client's perspective) - Collaborative (dances versus wrestles) - Accepting/non-judgmental - Positive & Hopeful - Evocative - Honoring of autonomy (respects the client's freedom of choice) 	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Suspends the expert-didactic-prescriptive-authority role	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Resists the “righting reflex” (the desire to fix things)	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Rolls with resistance (<i>discord/sustain talk</i>) versus fighting it	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Listens first! Client does most of the talking!	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses OARS to support the client in safely exploring experiences, concerns, values, and motivations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-ended questions - Affirmation - Reflective Listening - Summaries 	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Asks mostly open-ended versus close-ended questions	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• When listening, uses more complex than simple reflections	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Elicits and strengthens change talk. Uses a variety of strategies to encourage the client to give voice to their own wisdom, concerns, ambivalence, motivations, aspirations, ideas, and solutions	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Recognizes change talk when voiced, and responds to it by encouraging exploration	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Asks permission before raising a topic, addressing concerns, offering advice or exchanging information	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• After exchanging information (advice, education, clinical feedback), asks for client's response	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Holds the reins on action planning until the client is ready	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	
• Able to let go when client is not ready to change	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	

OARS

- ❖ Asks mostly **open (ahh)** versus close-ended questions

Strength-based Question
Change Talk Focused Question
Disarming Question

- ❖ **Affirms (clap)** the client by saying things that are positive or complimentary, focusing on strengths, abilities or efforts
- ❖ **Reflective Listening (snap)**
 - Listens carefully, without judgment and interruption
 - Allows for silence
 - Effectively uses “encourages” to invite client dialogue
 - Reflect, Reflect, Reflect
- ❖ Provides appropriate **summaries (pat)**

Resistance (Sustain Talk/Discord) Producing Style

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| - <i>Confronting</i> | - <i>Showing the way</i> | - <i>Pressuring</i> |
| - <i>Persuading</i> | - <i>Taking charge</i> | - <i>Criticizing</i> |
| - <i>Nagging</i> | - <i>Directing</i> | - <i>Scaring</i> |
| - <i>Interrupting</i> | - <i>Talking down to</i> | - <i>Rescuing</i> |
| - <i>Ordering</i> | - <i>Pulling the stroke</i> | - <i>Shaming</i> |
| - <i>Judging</i> | - <i>Exerting authority</i> | - <i>Scolding</i> |

Resistance Traps:

- The question-answer trap
- The taking sides trap
- The expert trap
- The labeling trap
- The scare tactics trap
- The pouncing trap
- The information overload trap
- **The premature action planning trap**

The “righting reflex”:

The need to...

- Fix things
- Set someone right
- Get someone to face up to reality

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