



## Supporting Positive Change: Motivational Interviewing in Schools

Mallori DeSalle, MA, LMHC, NCC, CMHC, CPS, MATS

Member of Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers

[mdesalle@indiana.edu](mailto:mdesalle@indiana.edu)

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### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Define Motivational Interviewing (MI) as an evidence-based communication style.
2. Explain circumstances when MI is applicable for both individuals and groups.
3. Identify aspects of MI that can be applied by education and health professionals in the classroom as well as with parents and fellow professionals.

### **Definition & Research-Base:** (1)

**Motivational Interviewing:** “Motivational Interviewing is a person-centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence.” -Miller & Rollnick

**Efficacy:** Motivational Interviewing has been researched for over 30 years in combination with other healthcare services. Research has included 500 clinical trials and more than 2000 peer-reviewed journal articles published on the use and efficacy of MI.

### **When MI Supports Change:** (2)

**Ambivalence:** Feeling both positive and negative about potential behavior change. This goes beyond lack of knowledge or deciding between a “right vs wrong” decision or behavior. Confidence is often a factor (Ability).

Change occurs when people have: **Desire, Ability, Reason and Need** to change. Using MI to strengthen motivation towards behavior change, people feel *Ready, Willing* and *Able*. (2)

### **Types of Communication:** (2)

**Directive:** Prescriptive in nature and critical during circumstances in which a client needs treatment provided to them.

**Following:** Passive in nature (listening more than talking.) Common as a person-centered style to build relationships or support patients when processing concerns.

**Guiding:** A strategic conversation where the professional partners with the patient to discuss benefits and barriers to change. Uses many common person-centered skills but operates with the intension of **reflecting change talk** to increase motivation.

## **Key Concepts of Motivational Interviewing: (1)**

**Change Talk:** Statements by the patient in the direction of change in present or future tense.

Desire

Ability

Reason

Need

Commitment

Activation

Taking Steps

**Guiding Principles:** Resist the “righting reflex.” Understand and explore the patient’s motivations. Listen with empathy. Empower the patient. **(RULE)**

**Mindset of Conversations:** Partnership, Acceptance, Compassion and Evocation. **(PACE)**

**Main Skills:** Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Summaries, **(OARS)**

**Advice with Permission:** Ask-Provide-Ask.

## **MI and Schools: (3)**

Rationale for using MI in schools is based on the core concepts of the spirit of MI and building a strength-based approach in communication.

Can be applied in all areas of school health/academics/communication.

Limited and promising research exists in this area of practice.

Utilization of the therapeutic alliance and ‘*Spirit of MI*’ are helpful to discuss *ambivalence* with students.

## **References:**

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Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers website: [www.motivationalinterviewing.org](http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org)

Prevention Insights Training Portal: (Free MI and Drug Trainings):  
<https://iprc.iu.edu/training/training.php>