



Clinician’s Pocket Guide on Motivational Interviewing

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Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change. It can be used with every patient in every encounter.

MI APPROACH	EXAMPLE
<p>Engage</p> <p>Emphasize empathy and collaboration with the patient.</p> <p>Understand circumstances from the patient’s point of view.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I’m interested in understanding what is most important to you about your health. ▪ If it is OK with you, I’d like to hear more about ____. ▪ How is ____ affecting your day to day life? ▪ What about this situation most concerns you?
<p>Focus</p> <p>Collaboratively identify and target the patient’s concern and relevant behavioral factors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Let’s look at what our focus should be in the time we have today. ▪ What connection, if any, do you see between [behavior] and what brought you in today? ▪ One of my main concerns is [behavior]. What are your thoughts about this?
<p>Evoke</p> <p>Elicit patient ambivalence regarding change.</p> <p>Evoke both “sustain talk” and “change talk,” with an emphasis on “change talk.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the benefits of [behavior] for you? ▪ What are some of the less beneficial aspects of [behavior] for you? ▪ What, if any, previous attempts have you made to change [behavior]? ▪ On a scale of 0-10, with 0 being not at all ready to change and 10 being ready to change today, how ready are you to change? If >0, “Why a __ and not a [lower number]?”
<p>Plan</p> <p>Collaboratively move from general goals to specific intentions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What will changing [behavior] specifically involve for you? ▪ What do you hope to specifically accomplish in the next [agreed-upon time frame]? ▪ Let’s see how this plan goes for you and we’ll discuss your progress at your next appointment.

<p>Emphasize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open-ended questions ▪ Affirmations ▪ Reflective listening ▪ Summaries ▪ Listening for ambivalence ▪ Developing discrepancy ▪ Listening for emotion ▪ Education only with permission or when patient asks for it ▪ Change talk ▪ Patient’s own motivations and autonomy <p>Avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being judgmental ▪ Advice-giving ▪ Debate 	<p>When you feel stuck</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen and reflect. ▪ Listen and reflect some more. ▪ Summarize. ▪ Ask the patient what else you need to know. ▪ Ask the patient how they would like to proceed. ▪ Ask what is most important to the patient. What factors seem to be associated with the most emotion? ▪ Consider whether there is sufficient discrepancy between the patient’s values/goals and current behavior to drive motivation for change. ▪ Consider whether you are trying to do “patient work” that is the patient’s responsibility (i.e., patient choices, behavior).
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References

1. Miller W R, Rollnick S. Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change and Grow. 4th ed. New York, NY, The Guilford Press, a division of Guilford Publications, Inc.; 2023.
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Treatment Improvement Protocol 35: Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Use Disorder Treatment. https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/tip35_final_508_compliant_-_02252020_0.pdf. Updated 2019. Accessed December 2024.

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