

Motivational Interviewing

Motivation & Change: Becoming motivated to change a behavior like addiction comes from a combination of factors:

Learning
Conditioning
Emotions
Social Influences
Genetic factors

Prior to letting go of the addictive life style, according to this theory, persons must experience an internal accounting of the pain and suffering and the negative consequences associated with the addiction plus have enough hope that this behavior can change.

Definition: Motivational Interviewing. It is defined as a “directive client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence”. It is client-centered because all of the benefits and consequences of making a change are elicited from the client. Since motivation to change can fluctuate, this state can become influenced by interacting with skilled staff. Motivational Interviewing is most effective at intake.

Motivational Strategies. Motivational Interviewing utilizes specific strategies to engage the client in the process of change. They include the following:

- 1) **Open-Ended Questions** – questions that facilitate dialog and cannot be answered in one or two words. Requires the recipient to reflect and respond with a coherent thought. Preferably, the question will move the client in the direction of talking about his or her need to make a change (change talk).
- 2) **Reflecting** – Statements (not questions) that the counselor makes to reflect back to the client what they just said using the client’s own words. Sometimes client’s can’t hear themselves clearly because of their internal resistance. Reflecting their statements back to them allows them to potentially come to their own individualized commitment to change versus feeling coerced into treatment and therefore resentful and rebellious
- 3) **Summarizing** – The counselor uses this technique periodically during the counseling session to be sure both parties agree on what has been stated so far and to remain clear on the content of the interview. The counselor links together several of the topics or ideas that have been discussed in the interview. For example, “okay Donna, today when you came in you said you really don’t want to quit drinking but then you said you are concerned that if you don’t quit, you might impact your daughter and you said that your daughter has recently had some problems at school. Is that right?” This summary is to be delivered without judgment. A skilled interviewer will deliver the summary in a way that motivates the client away from resistance and toward change.

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