

Self Assessment

Motivational Interviewing

**This was adapted from the MI self-evaluation checklist on the following website:
motivationalinterviewing.org.

An MI competent therapist will demonstrate the ability to skillfully...

...identify the client's stage of change through use of the readiness ruler

- **Effective:** Using a visual to depict a ruler from 0-10 (0=no interest in changing; 10=already making changes) and ask the client how ready he/she is to make a change, then asking the client what number he/she would like to be and what it might take to get them there
- **Less effective:** Telling the client where they should fall on the ruler
- **Less effective:** Judging the client's response

...normalize, explore, and reframe ambivalence through use of a **decisional balance exercise**

- **Effective:** Facilitate an exercise to help the client to think through the benefits and costs of changing his/her behavior vs not changing. Equally important, through the process the client reflects the client's thoughts on both sides of the scale.
- **Less Effective:** Having the client talk about the pros and cons of behavior change without reflecting
- **Less Effective:** Failing to acknowledge the benefits the client receives from the target behavior

...develop **discrepancy** between the client's actual and ideal behaviors and between client's behavior and larger values

- **Effective:** Helping the client to identify what is a value *to them* and reflecting how this is inconsistent with their current behavior, using a non-judgmental tone
- **Less Effective:** Making assumptions about the client's values
- **Less Effective:** Telling the client that his/her behaviors are inconsistent with their values and suggesting that they change
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... **roll with resistance** when a client becomes combative

- **Effective:** Meeting the client where they are and reflecting his/her statements back to them in an empathetic manner
- **Less Effective:** Being argumentative with the client about his/her defensiveness
- **Less Effective:** Discontinuing MI because you assume they don't want to change
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...develop a sense of **self-efficacy** within the client by actively supporting and affirming client strengths, and highlighting the client's freedom and choice

- **Effective:** Identifying client strengths and relaying these strengths back to the client in order to increase self-efficacy for change
- **Less Effective:** Suggesting that the client is powerless over his/her presenting problem
- **Less Effective:** Telling the client that he/she must change

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... integrate **affirmations** in session to support strengths, convey respect and appreciation, and deflect client resistance

- **Effective:** Joining with the client, supporting his/her thoughts and feelings, and building good rapport
- **Less Effective:** Expressing irritation with the client's behaviors
- **Less Effective:** Integrating your own personal beliefs about your own values or the status quo

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... use **reflective listening** to explore concerns, convey understanding, deflect resistance and elicit change talk

- **Effective:** Reflecting back to the client what they have said, highlighting and paying particular attention to language alluding to a desire to change
- **Less Effective:** Inaccurately reflecting the client's statements and pushing forward too soon toward change talk, which may lead to resistance
- **Less Effective:** Repeating statements verbatim, and not highlighting the discrepancy in their statements

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... use **open-ended questions** to explore concerns, promote collaboration, and understand client's perspective

- **Effective:** Asking open-ended questions that will give you a better sense of where the client is in terms of change so that you can more accurately reflect and highlight their thoughts and emotions
- **Less Effective:** Asking several consecutive closed-ended questions, which may increase the likelihood of resistance
- **Less Effective:** Therapist who talk most of the session following his/her own agenda and paying little attention to the responses of the client

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... use **summaries** to organize discussion and clarify current level of motivation

- **Effective:** Using statements such as "So what I hear you saying is", followed by summary statements which integrate and highlight the client's main points about their ambivalence about change; this also helps to keep the session directive
- **Less Effective:** Assuming that you understand (and the client feels you understand) without checking in with the client
- **Less Effective:** Leading a disorganized session, not covering all that you have planned, and getting off track (this is a directive, but client-centered, technique)