Motivational Interviewing Training Options

Individual Study and Self-Training

Perhaps the most common method by which clinicians explore MI is to study print materials and view training videotapes. Although this can provide some understanding of the basic approach, research by Miller and colleagues found that assigned self-training was not effective in improving clinical skilfulness in MI.

Introduction to Motivational Interviewing (1 hour to 1 day)

Training of up to one day can acquaint the audience with basic concepts and methods of MI, but is unlikely to increase the clinical skilfulness of participants in the practice of MI. The purpose of this type of workshop is to help participants determine how interested they are in learning more about MI. A trainer may provide some simple exercises that a practitioner can try with patients to get a "taste" of an MI style. The format may be primarily didactic, and may include live or videotaped demonstrations of MI.

Introduction to MI –Training Option (Introductory Workshop of 2-3 days)

With 16-24 hours of training contact time, it is possible to provide participants with an understanding of the spirit and method of MI, and to offer some practical experience in trying out this approach. A reasonable goal for this level of training is not MI proficiency, but rather to "learn how to learn" MI from ongoing practice.

Expect a mix of didactic presentation, demonstration, and practice exercises. A limited number of participants per trainer allows some opportunity for observation and feedback. Limitations will vary depending on the precise goals and nature of the training, but we recommend no more than 40 participants per trainer. Research and experience caution that attendees may leave a one-time introductory workshop overconfident in their mastery of MI. Optimally, this length of training should be provided in blocks of 4 hours or so, with opportunity in between for participants to practice MI and come back with experience and problems (for example, 4/4/4: 4 sessions of 4 hours each spread over 4 months). Many organizations choose to contract for full day concurrent workshops. While practical for attendees, this learning option reduces the applicability and retention of MI practice compared to dividing sessions with personal practice in between. Research indicates a reduction in MI skill level within 4 months (Miller & Mount, 2001). Adding opportunities for personal performance feedback (e.g., from practice audiotapes) and/or individual coaching can significantly increase the effectiveness of training in helping participants to improve their clinical proficiency.

Growing Current MI Skills: Training Options

Intermediate and Advanced Training

Intermediate/Advanced Clinical Training (2-3 days). For those who have learned the fundamentals of MI and practiced it over time and now seek more advanced training in MI.

• Training should include analysis of practice audio or videotapes.

• Expect more demonstration and practice exercises, and less didactic material.

• Focus in advanced training is on differentiating change talk from commitment language, and learning how to elicit and shape the two.

• Prior proficiency and experience in the practice of MI are assumed. Ongoing consultation and supervision (open-ended). Research indicates feedback and individualized training are most effective for gaining MI skills.

• This type of consultation can happen individually, within an organization, or contracted in addition to any workshop.

• Many MINT trainers offer individual consultation in person, telephonically, or through computer mediated communication such as video calls, digital audio or video recordings, and online classes. This allows for the most thorough adaptation of MI methods to specifics of the individual situation.