

Notes From

Motivational Interviewing with Adolescents and Young Adults

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Developmental Considerations

Formal Development Stage (11-12): Final stage of cognitive development, more likely to be able to have conversations about ambivalence. Better able to focus on longer term goals and values.

Lower developmental stages (below 11): require short term and concrete change goals.

Information Processing: Children lack experience and are more susceptible to interpersonal biases.

Identity formation: important to have accurate empathy.

Emerging Adulthood: new life roles and increased chance of high risk behaviors.

Autonomy: emotional and behavioral autonomy, key part of developing onto adulthood.

Family and Friends: acceptance vs. rejection by peers; reliance on feedback of close peers; it is important for clinician to understand who the YP values feedback from.

Emotional Lability: Emotions can run high and MI consistent stance may be to take a supportive stance, less focus on change talk when YP is overwhelmed by emotion. – but “The emotional waves that often ride the tide of the young person’s cognitive and decision making abilities are often present, and you surfing skills, even when the emotional ties are high, can serve you in continuing to help the young person swim to his or her destination” (pg. 14).

Spirit of MI

Autonomy: YP will push away if autonomy is violated. Support autonomy even given constraints by authority figures:

“you have a choice to discuss the rules with your parents and see if there is room to compromise, or you can decide to break the rules and deal with your parents’ reaction.” (pg. 17)

Collaboration: often clinician needs to support autonomy and address pressures of authority figures (guiding). Support YP in finding solution for themselves. Clinician is put in the guiding role of working with YP autonomous decision making and maximizing YP potential (bias towards change).

Evocation: solving problems for YP puts them in passive role. Elicit YP experience and reasons for change.

Principles of MI

Express Empathy: adolescents often have damaged/strained/conditional relationships with adults. Empathy is essential for the cultivation of intrinsic motivation.

Roll with Resistance: When personal freedoms are limited or controlled by others, negative feelings emerge and can turn to rebellion in YP, especially if YP is mandated.

Stop: reflect on situation, self and YP role and experience.

Drop: drop the issue of discord, let go of clinician arguments, counterarguments and problem behaviors.

Roll: express understanding and emphasize YP personal choice and autonomy.

Support Self Efficacy: clinician stance of hope and optimism. Honest belief that YP can succeed.

Example Session

Opening Statement

“Our time today may be different than with other people who have talked to you. I am not here to tell you what to change or how to change, but rather to find out what is going on in your life and help you make the changes that you decide to make.”

- if YP expresses disbelief: emphasize personal choice, possibly seek clarification.
- notice body language and eye contact
- generalizing “young people” instead of “you” may help as you can trigger anger.

Agenda Setting

“Would you prefer to talk first about marijuana, alcohol, or what’s going on at school?”

- Ask permission
- Visual Tools: draw the future, agenda setting chart, sort map

Typical Day Exercise

“Think about yesterday and take me through it. Just tell me what happened and if you want, tell me how you felt about things.”

- Explore what is important: start with less risky topics, setting the YP as expert on self

Elicit-Provide-Elicit or Ask-Tell-Ask

1) “If it’s OK with you, I would like to tell you about confidentiality.” 2) “Sure” 1) “Well basically I won’t share information you tell me unless it is about hurting yourself or someone else... What do you think of that?”

- Give 2-3 sentences of information at most.

Person-Centered Guiding Skills

Reflections

“When you offer a reflection to a young person, it is akin to handing over the steering wheel to the other person. While the idea of giving the keys of your car over to a first time driver can be disconcerting, we have learned that with time you can get better and better at allowing the young person to take control over the content of the MI. .. Given that adolescents often perceive themselves as not being listened to, when you choose to offer the gift of a reflection, we find that your present will most always be received with open arms. “(pg. 31).

- use more feelings than cognitive with YP.
- stay away from “cool metaphors”

- be careful with overuse of stems
- be careful with inflections, as they can feel judgmental to YP

Questions

Use questions that take focus away from the YP:

“why do other people think you need to be here?”

“what are other people concerned about?”

“what do others hassle you about?”

- Questions need to be curious, avoid sounding judgmental.
- Multiple Choice can be helpful
 - YP may not grasp question or feeling overwhelmed
 - Always provide “other” as a choice

Affirmations

- genuine
- specific
- avoid “I think...”
- Timing is important

Summaries

- connect the dots for the YP

Resistance

“resistance is a normal developmental process that results in 3 types of communication:”

1) resistance talk 2) sustain talk 3) lack of conversation(pg. 39)

- Reduction in sustain talk is more related to change than increases in change talk in YP.

Working with Resistance and Discord

Stop: take a neutral stance and reflect

Drop: drop the issue that is causing problems, avoid persuasion, do not argue or take a side

Roll: roll with resistance

“A good guide never gets too far in front” (pg.40).

Simple Reflections

(examples on page 40)

Omission Reflections

- helpful with YP is not talking or giving trite answers
- reflect back nonverbal cues

Amplified Reflections

- use open and honest tone
- attitude of empathy and not sarcasm
- Minimizing Reflections: there is not a reason to change
- Come Alongside: seek to understand if YP agrees with amplified reflection
- Use a Stem: "I am hearing; it seems like; you feel like; etc." can clarify that the clinician is not agreeing with YP.

Strategic Responses

- Emphasize personal control: reduces power struggle, find choice even in highly restrictive circumstances.

Pros and Cons

- Sometimes it can be helpful to elicits reasons for the status quo if there is discord and then explore the not so good things.
- It can be helpful to look at positives such as "staying clean" as opposed to "quitting drugs."
- Use E-P-E if YP cannot ID many pros of behavior change.

Agreement with a Twist Reframe

- validate their perspective and still offer something new.
- "your parents are really driving you crazy. I wonder if there is some way we can make all this attention they give you more supportive."

Shifting Focus

- Steer the conversation around the stumbling blocks
- Offer to not focus on areas YP does not want to discuss

Change Talk

"The young person's reasons for change may not be consistent with yours or that of other adults... it is important to maintain a nonjudgmental stance and recognize this really does not matter since the end result is increased motivation" (pg 49).

Reinforcing Change Talk to Continue the Journey

Reflect Change talk: although the use of "you" is not normally recommended with YP in reflections, it is useful when reflecting change talk. Also, remember to use double sided reflections ending in change talk.

Open Ended Questions: ask evocative questions without moving ahead too quickly. Avoid asking for plans or steps too early in the interaction.

Affirmations: Often come naturally when dealing with change talk, successes and motivations.

Summaries: Helpful to redirect conversation on change talk.

Questions to Elicit Change Talk

Direct Questions: Ask for change talk directly, it can help to tie this question to something you already know about the YP motivation, values and goals. It can also help to explore how others see need for YP change.

- "If you decided to make a change, what would it be?"
- "What is it about your behavior that other people might see as a reason for concern?"

Imagining Questions: exploring extremes, looking back and looking forward, developing discrepancy by imagining future without change alongside an existing goal. It can be effective to use an activity: drawing, acting out scenes and other multi-media activities can help with imagination.

Values Questions: Explore values and develop discrepancy between YP values/goals and behaviors. Short term and long term goals may seem at odds with each other. It can be useful to use an activity: values card sort.

- "I know you really want to be independent. I wonder how taking care of your health fits in with that."

Questions About Strengths: ask about past successes, what others have said YP is good at, offer observations. Activities can be helpful: affirmations card sort.

Additional Strategies to Elicit Change Talk

Rulers: Gauge the importance, confidence, etc of YP with change ruler. Why are you at a [higher number] and not a [lower number]? What would it take to get to the [higher number]?

Personalized Feedback: Factual information related to the YP situation may be helpful. Use E-P-E when giving information. There may be times to offer personalized and normative feedback regarding a change goal.

Commitment

Listen for Change Talk of Increasing Strength: Table from Moyers' MISC manual on pg 65.

Listen for Diminishing Sustain Talk: often the YP may increase sustain talk in the face of commitment. Interviewer should acknowledge ambivalence and continue to focus on change and working towards creation of a plan.

Testing the Waters: use a summary with an evocative question to transition to planning phase. If there is high emotions with the YP, consider postponing the planning till later. Some examples of questions to evoke planning language are on pg 67.

Developing a Plan: Components include goal, steps to reach the goal, IDing barriers, planning for barriers. Use E-P-E to provide information or examples from other YP experiences. Increase specificity of the plan and be sure that the goal matches the length of treatment.

Verbal and Written Plans: chose the best method to suit the client and situation. Flexibility is important.

Change Plans for YP Not Ready to Change: A YP may make a small change, think about making a change or revisit at a future session, but the option of skipping the planning process must be presented also.

Consolidating Commitment: Use OARS, evoking change talk and activities can help to build and strengthen commitment.

Follow-up Visits: review previous change plan and celebrate any small or large successes. Acknowledge and empathize with any setbacks and focus on change talk. Evaluate what phase of MI to approach YP with. When planning, revise and update change plan as situations change, motivations change and barriers change.

Integrating MI Into Your Practice

Integration of MI in Brief Intervention Settings

Examples: HIV Counseling, ED visits, pretreatment to encourage participation in groups, etc.

Skills: First identify target behavior, then allow YP to collaborate in agenda setting. Elicit YP PoV using OARS. It may be necessary to move into planning even when YP is not ready to change due to time constraints.

Integrating MI with Other Treatments

“MI is a good ingredient that fuels good practice” (pg. 77)

CBT and MI: Great chart explaining this on page 78. Adding MI can reduce ambivalence and solidify commitment to assignments and activities of CBT.

Extrinsic Motivation Approaches and MI: identify areas to offer choice for the YP, ask permission, use OARS and encourage client to take control.

Part 2 – Side Trips

Alcohol Problems
Marijuana Use
The Juvenile System
Sexual Risk Reduction
Smoking
Psychiatric Disorders
Eating Disorders
Obesity in Minorities
Self-Care for Chronic Medical Conditions
Group Alcohol and Drug Treatment
Applications in Schools
Family-Based Interventions

Part 3 – Choosing Your Own Path

Ethical Considerations
Developing Proficiency in Motivational Interviewing