One System One Voice

The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

A deeper look at the four elements
The Underlying Spirit of Motivational Interviewing (MI)

- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Acceptance
- Evocation

MI Spirit

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Partnership

– An active collaboration between people
– The helper is a companion who typically does less than half the talking
– Involves exploration, interest and support rather than persuasion or argument
– Move with rather than against the other person
– The helper still leads and skillfully guides just as in a waltz
– The helper activates the person’s own motivation and resources for change

   The helper CANNOT change the person, only they can change

– Not something done by an expert to a passive recipient (e.g. teacher to pupil, a master to a disciple)
– Not done “to” or “on” someone

This partnership aspect bespeaks a profound respect for the other
A Deeper look at the four elements

Acceptance

– Absolute Worth
  • Does NOT mean you necessarily approve of the person’s actions or acquiesce to the status quo
  • Your personal approval (or disapproval) is irrelevant
  • Acceptance involves prizing the inherent worth and potential of the person
  • Unconditional positive regard – profound respect for the individual

– Accurate Empathy
  • An active interest in and effort to understand the other’s internal perspective
  • To see the world through their eyes
  • Ability to understand another’s frame of reference and the conviction to do so

– Autonomy Support
  • Honoring and respecting each person’s autonomy, their irrevocable right and capacity of self-direction
  • Acknowledging a person’s freedom of choice diminishes defensiveness
  • Let go of the idea and burden that you have to (or can) make people change (relinquish the power you never had in the first place)

– Affirmation
  • To seek and acknowledge the person’s strengths and efforts
Four Aspects of Acceptance

- Absolute Worth
- Affirmation
- Autonomy
- Accurate Empathy
A Deeper look at the four elements

Compassion
– To actively promote the other’s welfare
– To give priority to the other’s needs
– A deliberate commitment to pursue the welfare and best interest of the other

Evocation
– To call forth form within, to draw out
– People already have within them much of what is needed, your task is to evoke it
– Assume there is a deep well of wisdom and experience within the person
– Understand the person’s perspective and wisdom

To work with a spirit of compassion is to have your heart in the right place so that the trust you engender will be deserved
Two Approaches

Docere
This perspective starts very much from a deficit model, that the person is lacking what is needed.

Ducere
This perspective starts with the assumption that there is a deep well of wisdom and experience within the person from which the helper can draw. Much of what is needed is already there, and it’s a matter of drawing it out, calling it forth

The MI practitioner is keenly interested in understanding the person’s perspective and wisdom and evoking change from within.