## Overview of Motivational Interviewing Concepts

#### What is motivational interviewing?

Motivational interviewing is a technique or style of counseling that is patient centered.

* It aims to help patients explore and resolve their ambivalence or mixed feelings about behavior change.
* By helping people recognize their mixed feelings or ambivalence and the discrepancy between what they know they should do and what they actually do, it can help move them toward making positive changes.

#### What are the components of motivational interviewing?

It includes the spirit of motivational interviewing, four central principles, and four skills or techniques.

* The spirit of motivational interviewing includes collaboration, acceptance, evocation, and compassion.
* The four central principles are to express empathy, roll with resistance, develop discrepancy, and support self-efficacy.
* The four skills or techniques are open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summaries.
* The acronym for these skills is OARS.

#### Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

The spirit of motivational interviewing is not really techniques but is called a “way of being.” It has more to do with how you make people feel than what you say.

* **Collaboration** involves working with clients as partners.
* There is a focus on mutual understanding rather than the clinician or coach being right.
* **Acceptance** involves respecting the patient’s autonomy and allowing patients to make their own decisions without judging them.
* **Evocation** involves drawing out the client’s thoughts and ideas by asking questions rather than telling people what to do.
* **Compassion** means that the clinician demonstrates genuine care and concern by seeking to understand others’ experiences, values, and motivations without judgment.
* These are the underlying **values** of motivational interviewing.

#### Four Central Principles of Motivational Interviewing

The four central principles of motivational interviewing are as follows:

* **Express empathy**, which is often done by using reflective listening.
* **Develop discrepancy**, which generally involves using double-sided reflections.
* **Roll with resistance**, which involves reframing resistance slightly to create momentum toward change and avoiding arguing for change or using persuasion.
* **Support self-efficacy**, which may be done by exploring what the patient has been successful at previously and helping them build on previous successes.

#### Skills and Techniques of Motivational Interviewing

The basic interaction skills and techniques for motivational interviewing are the OARS, which are open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries.

* **Open-ended questions** are used to probe and learn more about what a client has said. Often, these open-ended questions start with the words “what” and “how.”
* **Affirmations** are statements that recognize and reinforce success or acknowledge any progress and express optimism.
* **Reflections** involve mirroring what the patient is saying to express empathy or stating what you believe the patient means by a statement.
* **Summaries** involve providing a synopsis after a client has talked at length to help clarify what has been said or shift a stuck conversation.

#### Video Resources

These two short videos show different communication skills. The first video demonstrates a physician using communication skills that are “nonmotivational.” The second video shows the application of motivational interviewing skills.

* MerloLab. (2009). *The Ineffective Physician: Non-Motivational Approach* (5:10 minutes). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80XyNE89eCs>
* MerloLab. (2009). *The* **Effective** *Physician: Motivational Interviewing Demonstration* (6:32 minutes). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URiKA7CKtfc>

#### References

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Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (1991). *Chapter 3. Motivational interviewing as a counseling style*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64964/>

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