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The Changing Times

Listen. Learn. Motivate.

Spring 2007 Issue

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Using MI to Teach an Alternative to Dieting

Gary Rose, Ph.D.

Ellen Glovsky, Ph.D., RD

Greetings Ellen,

Welcome to the Institute for Motivation and Change! We've got an interesting series of workshops planned for this spring, including an opportunity to explore the applications of MI with kids. For those of you interested in visiting Scotland this May, we've got two days of training scheduled in Edinburgh with [Jeff Allison](#), a wonderful MI trainer. Still on the planning board are offerings in group MI and MI for supervisors. The field continues to evolve, with more and more practitioners expressing interest in applying this consultation style to their professional endeavors. Keep checking our site for more webinar and workshop offerings.

Training Opportunities



Motivational Interviewing in Healthcare: Advanced Workshop with Gary Rose April 6, 2007

Location: Northeastern University
[Register Now](#)

Practice Corner

As health educators and promoters of health behavior change, we use conversation to influence client's interest in, and commitment to their health. What we say and how we say it often make all the difference between success and failure. In MI, we describe the effective elements of health behavior change consultation with the acronym OARS:

1. Ask **O**pen-ended Questions
2. **A**ffirm
3. Listen **R**eflectively
4. **S**ummarize

1. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions may be contrasted with closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions prompt single word or short answer responses from clients. Examples include, "Are you feeling depressed today?" or "Do you want to stop smoking?" They tend to be conversation-



**Motivational
Interviewing and Health
Behavior Change:
Introductory Workshop
with Gary Rose
April 28, 2007**

Location: Northeastern
University

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**Webinar: What is
Motivational
Interviewing?
with Ellen Glovsky
May 1, 2007**

Requires high speed
internet connection

[Register Now](#)

**MI & Health Education:
Advanced Seminar in
Brief and Directive
Adaptations
with Gary Rose
May 18, 2007**

Location: Northeastern
University

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**MI & Kids: A Beginner's
Workshop for
Professionals Working
with Children
with Gary Rose
June 15, 2007**

Location: Northeastern
University

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stoppers. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, tend to function as "door openers," inviting clients to talk: "How are you feeling today?", "What role has nicotine played in your life today?" Clients can respond to these questions in many different ways. If their responses are handled effectively by the practitioner, extended conversations will ensue.

2. Affirm

Affirming the client is a key ingredient of the MI style. Affirmation is a wonderful way to enhance self-efficacy and empowerment; it acknowledges clients' positive attributes as they participate in an endeavor that is all too skewed toward a discussion of their problems and shortcomings. Effective affirmations are brief and precise; for example, "You are really committed to keeping your food logs," or "You're really trying hard to quit this time - it's very important to you."

3. Listen Reflectively

The MI consultation style is built on a foundation of highly skilled reflective listening. Reflective listening, offering small summaries of client utterances or the presumed meaning of these statements, is the vehicle for delivering effective empathy, a key component of health behavior change counseling. Reflective listening serves as a partner to open-ended questions; perhaps the most effective way to interview a client is to ask an open question and then to follow it with at least two reflective statements; the first reflection simply summarizes what the person said and the subsequent reflections address the thoughts, ideas, or feelings that underlie the utterance.

4. Summarize

Summarization is an exceptionally effective way that the practitioner can guide the client towards a commitment to change. Summaries that identify change talk and the discrepancy between current behavior and client core values and life goals are highly motivational and increase commitment to change.

So, when you interview a client, be certain to use your **OARS**.

Visit Us!

**Motivational
Interviewing Institute**



**Using MI to Teach an Alternative to
Dieting**

Motivational Interviewing can be very effective when working with people regarding their diet and nutrition. Most people think they should just try harder and be more disciplined, or try the next new diet that will be "the one that works." This idea gives the power to the diet itself to "work," whereas the goal is really to help clients develop their own intrinsic motivation to change. This is the

essence or spirit of MI: the building of personal, often idiosyncratic reasons for change.

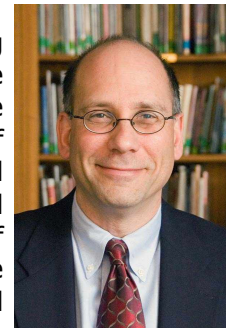
We can help clients by asking these three simple questions:

1. What if you tuned into your body's signals and ate only when you were physically hungry and
2. Ate the foods you REALLY wanted to eat, and
3. Stopped eating when you were full?

This set of questions is deceptively simple yet very powerful. Clients who have struggled to control themselves around food find this revolutionary, and even a bit frightening. For it prompts them to look inward for the what, whens and hows of eating, rather than to some external set of dieting ideals or principles. In essence, clients already have most of the answers regarding their behavior with food, and the practitioner's principle task is to elicit these ideas, and to collaborate regarding the formulation of a cogent action plan. This is an excellent example of the Motivational Interviewing principle of "elicit first, educate second."

Gary Rose, Ph.D.

Gary S. Rose, Ph.D. is a practicing clinical psychologist and a member of the steering committee of MINT, the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers. He provides training and consultation to various clinical and research units within Tufts School of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, and the University of Wales College of Medicine.



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