



THE WINGSPAN:

**Center for Learning
and Writing Support**

Motivational Interviewing

A pathway to effective
communication.

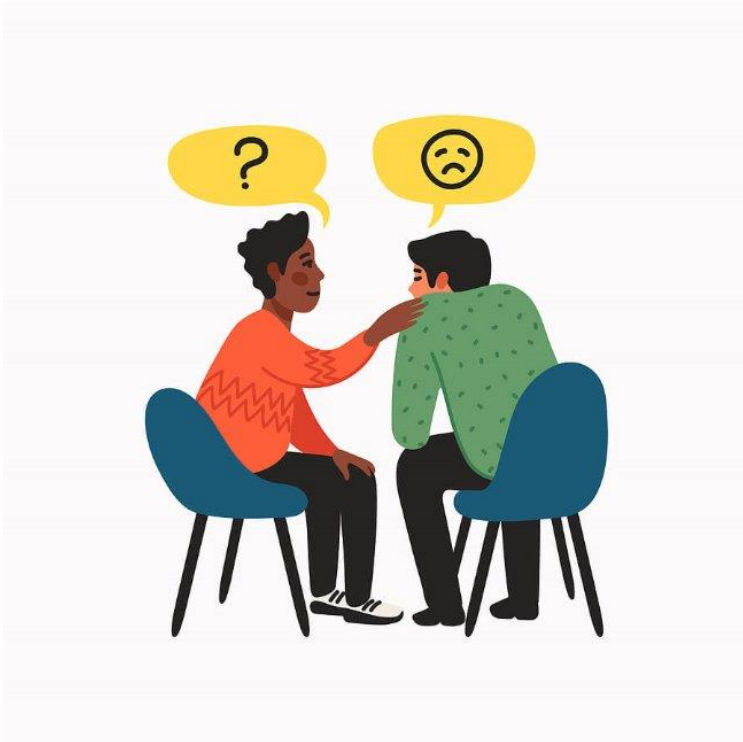
Motivational Interviewing (MI)

“MI is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person’s own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 29)

MI is guided by four key principles

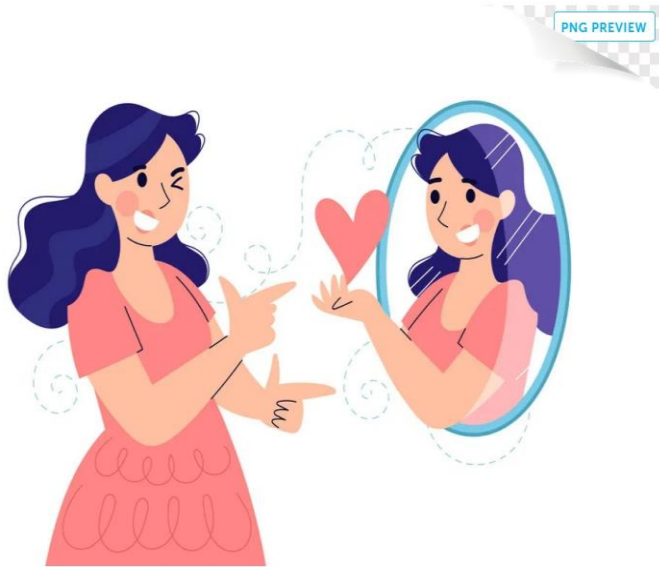
- Express Empathy
- Support Self-Efficacy
- Roll with Resistance
- Develop Discrepancy

Express Empathy



A good peer educator will carefully listen to the student and convey that they understand the student's ambiguity, feelings, and experiences.

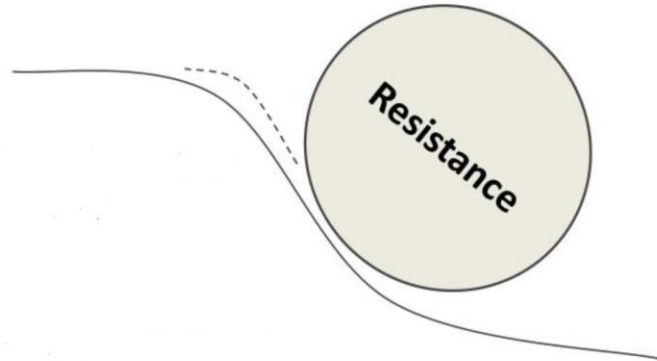
Support Self-Efficacy



MI strongly assumes that the student possesses the strength and ability to process complex ideas, grow, and learn even if there have been failed attempts in the past.

Encourage the student's capacity to reach their goals through open affirmations.

Roll with Resistance



If a student is struggling to change, avoid becoming defensive or argumentative if you encounter resistance.

Help the student identify the problem and solution themselves.

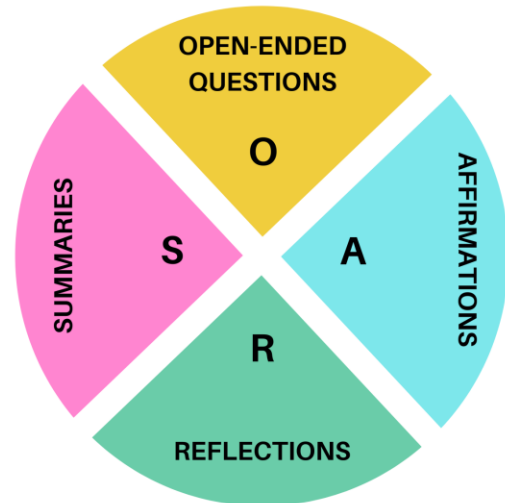
Develop Discrepancy



Help the student identify discrepancies between their present circumstances and their future goals.

Good time to do some self-reflection, checking for understanding on a topic.

Basic communication techniques used in MI



OARS

- Open Questions (O)

Probing, complex questions that cannot be answered with yes/no.

- Affirmations (A)

Words and phrases used to motivate, encourage, and challenge doubt.

- Reflective listening (R)

Based on active listening and used to understand your peer and yourself.

- Summary Reflections (S)

Way to make sure you understand what is being communicated.

Open-ended questions (O)

Why open-ended questions?

They help gather descriptive information. They help the student self-reflect.

What do they look like?

Answers to these questions require more than a simple yes/no answer.

Example:

"Tell me about your day!" instead of *"how was your day?"*

"How do you feel about this topic?" Instead of *"Do you like this topic?"*

Let's practice!

- Do you feel anxious about this upcoming exam?
- Does that make sense?
- Is memorizing for your anatomy class consuming a lot of your time?

Affirmations (A)

These are compliments or statements of appreciation and understanding.

- Praise positive changes/understanding of a concept.
- Support the student when they describe a difficult situations.
- Be sincere.

Why Affirm?

Helps build rapport, self-confidence/self-efficacy.

Example:

- *"Thank you for your hard work today."*
- *" You took a lot of courage today to show up and be present. I appreciate you and I am rooting for you."*

Let's practice!

- **Which of the following are examples of affirmations?**
 - *"I enjoyed talking to you today and getting to know you a bit."*
 - *"You have to change, and if you don't it will be totally unresolvable."*
 - *"You are a very hardworking person. The way you show commitment, makes me want to mirror it too."*
 - *"You took a big step today by attending this SI session. I am here for you if you have any questions."*

Let's practice!

- **Which of the following are examples of affirmations?**
 - a)** *"I enjoyed talking to you today and getting to know you a bit."*
 - b)** *"You have to change, and if you don't it will be totally unresolvable."*
 - c)** *"You are a very hardworking person. The way you show commitment, makes me want to mirror it too."*
 - d)** *"You took a big step today by attending this SI session. I am here for you if you have any questions."*

More affirmation examples?

Reflective Listening (R)

"Reflective Listening is a way of checking rather than assuming that you know what is meant." (Miller and Rollnick, 2002)

- Involves listening and understanding the full meaning of what the student says.
- Empathy is an accurate predictor of this complex skill.
- Repeat and rephrase/paraphrase (with synonyms) the statement.
- Reflection of feeling: listener is fully immersed in the conversation to understand the emotional aspects.

Why listen reflectively?

- Develops rapport and trust.
- Encourages further explorations of areas where support may be needed.
- Can be used strategically to facilitate change.

Reflective Listening Example:

Student: *"OMG! This topic is so confusing. I don't think I will ever be able to understand it." *sigh**

Peer Educator: *"ufff...So, you feel like this is one of the most complicated concept you are trying to learn." (mirroring the sentiment and paraphrasing it)*

Student: *Yes!*

Peer Educator: *"Let's work on it together. Feel free to stop me if you have questions on the topic as we discuss this. We got this!"*

Reflective Listening Example 2:

Student: *"I have a learning disability and the way my class is structured, I am lost, and many times, I am just sitting in class." (read non-verbal cues too)*

Peer Educator: *"So, it sounds like the way you learn and the way the class is set up do not match. I am sure it is rough and being lost in class also means it is affecting understanding the content of the lecture. I am sorry! "*

Student: *Yes!*

Peer Educator: *If I may ask, have you been able to connect with any of the other supportive resources on campus? Our help session is a start, and we can keep working on any areas of concern you might have on the topic. If you are wanting to learn more about any of the support services, please let me know, I can help with that too.*

Student: *"As of now, just tutoring, but can you tell me more about other supportive resources, please?"*

Examples of non-reflective listening

- Ordering, directing, commanding.
- Warning/threatening.
- Giving advice, trying to "problem-solve" without listening.
- Persuading with logic, arguing, defending.
- Telling what to do (preaching).
- Judging, blaming, and criticizing.

Let's Practice!

Student: *"I have way 3 papers that are due this week. I think it is practically impossible to finish it and I am not motivated to pursue it now."*

Peer Educator:

Summaries (S)

- Periodically summarize what has happened in the help session.
- Summaries show that you have been listening carefully and help the student to move on.
- Allows you to be strategic about which part of the talk needs to be reinforced in the direction of change.
 - It can be done in the beginning (a catchup from the previous help session).
 - At the end of the session.
 - And in-between when switching to a different topic.

Summaries Examples

- Begin with a statement that indicates you are making a summary.
- Examples:
 - Let me see if I understand so far...
 - Here's what I have heard. Tell me if I have missed anything.

Summaries Example:

Student: *"I have chatted with my friend, and they think that I spend too much time perfecting on some areas of my work, leaving me to neglect some other important aspects of my work and life. What do I do? How do I prioritize my tasks?"*

Peer Educator: *"Here's what I have heard. You have been told that you spend too much time on being perfect in some aspects of your work that you end up neglecting some other aspects of life and work, and you are seeking help to learn prioritizing tasks? Tell me if I missed anything."*

Let's Practice!

Student: *"I need to know the answer now and without it, I will not be able to complete this assignment that is due tomorrow."*

Peer Educator:

Citations:

- Miller WR, Rollnick S, editors. *Motivational interviewing: preparing people for change*. 2nd ed. New York: Guilford Press; 2002.
- Miller, W.R. & Rollnick, S. (2013) *Motivational Interviewing: Helping people to change* (3rd Edition). Guilford Press

Thank you!
Any questions?