Motivational Interviewing Newsletter: Updates, Education and Training
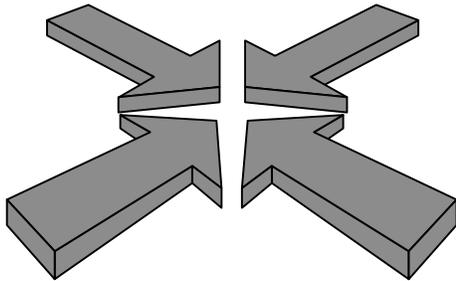
New Perspectives

From the Desert

Bill Miller

When Is It Change Talk?

For the second edition of MI, Steve and I have been using the term *change talk* for what I had previously termed self-motivational statements. Change talk continues to play a central role within the theoretical framework that has evolved for understanding how and why MI works. It is the vocalization of change talk that begins to tip the client's balance of ambivalence in favor of change. It is change talk that is the homing beacon for a motivational interviewer, the immediate feedback that tells you you're doing it right.

All of this is predicated on the assumption that change talk actually does predict behavior change, and conversely that resistance signals a decreased probability of change. The strongest evidence for this thus far comes from Paul Amrhein's research on the psycholinguistics of MI, presented most recently (September, 2000) at the 9th International Conference on Treatment of Addictive Behaviors in Cape Town, South Africa. Paul has documented what is, to date, the only causal chain that works in demonstrating the active processes within MI. Earlier we had tried a simpler approach (as in Project MATCH), measuring motivation for change via questionnaires (such as URICA and SOCRATES) before and after MI, hoping that such measures would reflect a differential effect on motivation that, in turn, would predict behavior change. In several attempts, it simply hasn't worked for us. Motivation questionnaires just don't seem to capture what is going on in MI.

Process analyses of MI sessions, coding both therapist and client behavior, has proven to be more fruitful. In one study (Miller, Benefield, & Tonigan, 1993), we were able to predict 12-month drinking outcomes from client resistance behavior (inversely), as well as from therapist confrontation responses. We did not, however, find a relationship between frequency of self-motivational statements and behavior change. Following this lead, Paul has applied his system for psycholinguistic coding of commitment, which reflects not only the frequency but also the strength of client committing language. He has not yet published his results, but presentations of his findings at several scientific meetings have shown clear prediction of changes in illicit drug use from the patterning of client committing language during MI sessions (E-mail address for

Dr. Amrhein: amrhein@unm.edu). Recently I have had the fun of coding more MI tapes via the Motivational Interviewing Skill Code (MISC), an evolution of the coding system we used in our 1993 study, substantially refined in collaboration with MINT colleagues at the Kaiser-Permanente Center for Health Research during my 1997-98 sabbatical there. [The current version of this system can be found on our CASAA website at http://casaa.unm.edu.] Although we had anticipated that the process of coding MI tapes might be tedious and dull, in fact it turned out to be stimulating and enjoyable, and that is still my experience. It takes a lot of effort and concentration, but nothing gets you inside the process of MI quite so well as this kind of detailed process coding.

Such coding invariably raises the question of what counts as a change talk response. The MISC system has only four codes for client responses: Ask (for questions), Follow (for neutral responses that reflect neither movement toward nor away from change), Resist Change (for statements that reflect commitment to status quo), and Change Talk. In training new coders, I have found that it is less than crystal clear when a response constitutes change talk or resistance. As a general rule, we have said that when in doubt, code it as follow/neutral, but I think we need a clearer understanding of what counts as change talk. Ideally, we would clarify this empirically, by studying which kinds of responses do, in fact, predict behavior change. In the interim, here are some of the complexities that we have been confronting.

Target Behavior. During MI sessions, people may voice commitment to various kinds of change. In interviews with people regarding their illicit drug use, for example, we have heard strong commitment language for ending a relationship, finding a place to live, getting back custody of children, changing jobs, etc. Does this count as change talk? We decided that for each context, it is necessary to define the target behavior(s), to be used in judging whether a particular statement constitutes change talk (+) or resistance (-). That is, change talk is defined in relation to a specific target behavior. If the statement does not clearly

pertain to change in the target behavior(s), it is coded as follow/neutral (0), even though it may reflect a strong level of commitment. Consider this example:

Therapist at drug abuse treatment program [T]: So tell me what it is that brings you here today.

Female client [C]: I want to get my kids back. (0)

T: You're missing them.

C: Yes, I am! And they ought to be with their Mama. It's not right. (0)

T: Not right that the state took custody of them.

C: Right! I mean, I guess I understand they are worried about my being a good mother. (0)

T: How so?

C: My arrests and all, and the cocaine. You're not the best mother when you're on coke. (+)

T: Give me an example.

C: Well, like when I'm high, I'm not really worrying about anything. I'm just feeling like everything and everybody is great, at least until I start coming down, and so I don't keep track of my kids like I should. (+)

T: What else?

C: I need to find a better place to live. (0)

Past Tense. It is common for drinkers, at least, to talk about how much they *used to* drink, and what negative consequences it caused in the past. On the face of it, that could sound like problem recognition, but sometimes the function of it is to assert that the drinking problems *are in the past* and that there is no present need for change. This is clear in Terri Moyers' classic interview with "the rounder" on the training tape *Handling Resistance*. The rounder describes how his drinking *used to be* heavy and problematic, and it functions as an argument *against* change now. Indeed, the familiar "drunkalogs" at AA meetings

are of this ilk, and are voiced by people who are now abstinent and have been for some time. They are describing "how it was," which may have little or no implication for whether change is currently needed. We have been using the tense of verbs as a key for whether a response is change talk or not. How might you code these?

T: How is your drug use preventing you from getting your children back?

C1: Well, I used to use quite a bit, and I know it got out of control.

T: In what ways?

C2: I'd get a paycheck and blow it all on coke, and then have no food money.

T: But you don't do that any more.

C3: No. I mean, I still spend too much sometimes, but it's nothing like it was.

T: So that's one disadvantage of cocaine, in terms of getting your kids back.

C4: I want to give it up, you know, but it's hard to quit.

T: You do fine for a while.

C5: I did quit for three months once, but I wound up going right back.

T: So you're pretty discouraged about ever being able to kick this.

C6: Well, I really want to get my kids back.

T: And that's a powerful reason for you to try again.

C7: Yeah, I need to try again.

Responding to Questions. Does it count as change talk if the client is just responding to a question? Yes, I believe it does. In fact, asking open questions is one of the chief ways for eliciting change talk, but even if it is a response to a closed question, it can count as change talk. Consider this segment:

T: So getting your children back is reason enough for you to give it a good try again.

C: Yes, sure.

T: Do you think you can do it?

C: I'm not sure. Probably I can, but it's going to be hard.

T: How important is this to you?

C: I want my kids back, and they're going to drug test me, so there's no other way to get them back.

T: So you really have to quit coke if your kids are going to be with you.

C: Yes, I do.

I would code all four of these client responses as change talk.

I realize that one limitation of the MISC system is that we are counting the frequency of responses, but have no index of the strength of responses. That is an advantage of Amrhein's system, which codes the level of commitment reflected in client speech, and not just frequency. We don't know yet the percentage of variance accounted for by each of these coding systems, and ultimately we hope to determine which responses are most predictive of outcomes, thereby simplifying the coding system. In the meantime, it's all systems go. We need to know a lot more about what aspects of client in-session speech really do predict behavior change.

Coding Corner

There has been growing interest in the MISC system Bill referred to above. Terri is involved in building a "coding shop" at the University of New Mexico, is actively training coders and coding project tapes. Denise was involved in the development of the MISC, currently uses it for research purposes, and is involved in the effort to apply it to brief interventions that are not strictly MI. We decided to share some of our experiences in the newsletter.

Terri Moyers and Denise Ernst

Selection of coders

It is not an exaggeration to say that the selection of coders is the most critical decision that will be made in any coding project. Good coders must be dependable, able to devote substantial concentration over sustained periods of time and conscientious enough to endure when the task becomes repetitive or dull. Surprisingly, we have found that clinical skills are not a good predictor of coder success and have found good coders to have the characteristics mentioned above combined with an intellectual curiosity about the content of the tapes. If a large coding project is contemplated, the availability of the coder over time is also a critical issue, since inter-rater reliability estimates will depend on matched pairs of coders. Losing one member of the matched pair compromises reliability, so longevity of coders is a consideration in the hiring process.

Training of coders

Our strategy for successful training of coders involves three steps. The first step is the selection process discussed above. The second step is the initial training process. One option is to begin the initial training process by having students read selected chapters from the Miller & Rollnick book or articles related to motivational interviewing and viewing the motivational interviewing training tapes. This should ideally involve a regular (ideally biweekly) meeting in which all members of the coding team meet and review tapes together. Ratings are shared and inconsistencies are resolved using tapes which are similar, but not identical, to the projected data. Tapes intentionally selected to include specific examples of relevant dimensions (for example affirmations) can be used.

It is during this initial training process that decisions about context, tone and decision rules about including or excluding self-motivational statements and other data points will become prominent. A set of rules can be generated, perhaps even with prototype examples to be used as anchors for the coders. Such a "project Bible" is also likely to be extremely helpful when new coders must be trained in the same project. Importantly, this initial training process establishes a "culture" about the seriousness of the coding endeavor as well as providing specific decision rules for coders when they are immersed in their tapes.

In our experience, the time commitment necessary for the initial training process is easy to underestimate. As an example, the initial training process for our last coding project involved six weeks of biweekly two hour meetings before sufficient interrater reliability was achieved to permit independent coding (between .65 and .85, depending on the variable). The coders being trained were master's level experimental psychology students with a strong interest in the project and previous experience in behavioral coding with another typology. We are still in the process of developing guidelines for realistic interrater reliability for the MISC system, and it is likely that some variables (for example, talk time)

will have substantially greater reliability than others (for example, Confront). It is also likely that reliabilities will vary across the three coding passes, so that our guidelines may include some differences for reliabilities in global ratings versus behavior counts. At a minimum, the guidelines will include a recommendation for acceptable thresholds for each coding pass, as well as an overall interrater reliability for the entire MISC document.

The third step in the training of coders involves monitoring of the independent coding product. Now coders have begun to code independently and the coding coordinator will select a sample of the coders tapes to be double-coded. The interrater reliability will be computed to insure that the coder maintains appropriate fidelity to the established procedure. It may also be desirable to compare coding pairs to each other as well as to the gold standard. In fact, if results are to be reported for publication or grant proposals, consistent two-pair codes are likely to be requested. An important consideration in this third step of the training process is the decision rules to be generated for resolving expected discrepancies. Will consensus be mandated, are the differences to be averaged, or shall the more "conservative" rating prevail? These decision rules should be generated in advance of this third step and can come naturally from the second step negotiation process.

Using MISC coding for brief interventions: is there any overlap? What can you use? What won't work?

The MISC system can theoretically be used to code any type of encounter. How one uses and/or interprets the results of the coding is another issue. This is particularly true for those interventions that are "motivationally informed" as opposed to being MI. These interventions are most often brief in nature and usually delivered by non-counselors. In terms of the standards related to the MISC, this is uncharted territory. Without set standards, it is difficult to really measure if an encounter is "motivationally informed". Each project needs to answer the question "Given the circumstances of the intervention (including context, location, and content), the skill/background of the people delivering the intervention, the amount and quality of the training provided, and the amount and quality of ongoing support and coaching, what is reasonable to expect?"

Ideally, the project would develop a "gold standard" intervention based on reasonable expectations. For example, in a brief intervention, it might be very difficult to get a 2:1 ratio of reflections to questions that are expected for MI. However, it might be very reasonable to get a 1:1 ratio. In other cases, the investigators might decide that given the circumstances, it is impossible to train the providers to do reflective listening. The coding might then focus on the percentage of open-ended questions or talk time.

Another approach, still using the MISC system, might be to focus on MI-inconsistent responses. There is some evidence that eliminating those responses such as confrontations, advice without permission, directing, threatening, and raising concern without permission is more important than just adding MI-consistent responses. These might be even more important in some situations and a given project might develop standards around MI-inconsistent responses.

Many of the brief, less-than-MI interventions are strategy driven as opposed to MI skill based. Strategies may include exploring concerns, pros and cons, assessing motivation/confidence/ readiness/ interest/importance, decisional balance, values card sort, or facilitating action planning. These strategies are usually designed using MI principles and are often delivered with well-scripted protocols used to guide the process. The strategy may be only one part of an intervention that is also based on other theoretical models. It is conceivable that a project could code only that portion of the intervention that was expected to be MI-consistent. As we have seen, it may also have modified standards for the assessment of that strategy as well. It may be more important to code the adherence to the protocol in other ways besides the ones use in MISC. For example, it is not just open-ended questions but the quality of the questions and the order they are asked that determine the success of strategy.

We have been discussing issues related to coding utterances in the encounter. However, the global dimensions associated with the MISC system are equally important. From our coding experience to date, it is generally accepted that a good coder can code globals on any encounter of any duration. This may involve discussion and consensus of the group on how each dimension relates to the project and context involved. For example, in very brief encounters it may be necessary to define how an interventionist is egalitarian in 5 minutes. It may be very different from how one demonstrates that quality in 15 minutes or an hour.

Pilot Project in Emergency Shelter

Robert Rhodes

Several of us at the University of AZ are starting a pilot study to see how clients of an emergency shelter program for homeless families might use a motivational enhancing session at the beginning of their stay in the shelter. The hope is to produce some increased attendance at treatment activities, like counseling sessions for parenting, employment, or substance abuse. About 50 - 70% of the clients are using substances in a way that might interfere with their health and well being. Additionally other aspects of the client's participation in the community of the shelter will be watched: how reliably they complete their 6 hours a week of "chores", if they are on the property by the specified evening time, and ratings by case managers of the client's motivation.

This study is similar to others that have used motivational interviewing prior to a structured treatment (Brown & Miller, 1993; Bien, Miller & Boroughs, 1993). These homeless clients have a greater variety of concerns and may create less hope for themselves than some clients seeking treatment for substance use. The "external rewards" of shelter and meals creates a challenge in assessing and increasing the client's motivation. I have seen the same dilemma when thinking about liver transplant patients: the patient's motivation to stop drinking is assessed as part of evaluating if a transplant will occur; the patient knows what the desired responses are and may not himself be able to discern how motivated he is to stop drinking because of the "pressure" of wanting to receive the transplant. These homeless clients may report being motivated to complete all manner of activities so as to comply with what they image is expected, or because of their current literal hunger, or because they are describing their sustainable intent to engage in health promoting activities.

The motivationally enhancing session we are going to try follows a sequence of activities developed for other settings. The agenda setting approach that Stott and Rollnick have used is presented so that the clients can select areas that are important to their health (Stott, Rollnick, Rees, & Pill, 1995). A series of open-ended questions following the Motivational Structure Questionnaire (Cox, Klinger & Blount, 1993) is used to create the dialog about how and what the clients are expecting might happen in this area of their life. The counselor can then select to use a number of worksheets that address the pros and cons of a health compromising activity, advantages and disadvantages of making a change, identifying personal values that might be consistent with the health promoting behavior, or envisioning the future. The counselor will also learn from the client and address her sense of optimism and hope by using two standard questionnaires (Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994; Snyder, et al. 1991).

I am currently training the two counselors who will provide the motivation enhancing session. We start collecting data in mid January 2001.

Bien, T., Miller, W. & Boroughs, J. (1993). Motivational interviewing with alcohol outpatients. Behavioral & Cognitive Psychotherapy, 21(4), 347-356.

Brown, J. & Miller, W. (1993). Impact of motivational interviewing on participation and outcome in residential alcoholism treatment. Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 7, 211-218.

Cox, W., Klinger, E., & Blount, J. (1993). Systematic motivational counseling: a treatment manual. (version GEN2.4.93). North Chicago VA Medical Center: Author.

Scheier, M., Carver, C., & Bridges, M., (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): A reevaluation of the Life Orientation Test. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67(6), 1063-1078.

Snyder, C., Harris, C., Anderson, J., Holleran, S., Irving, L., Sigmon, S., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., & Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways: Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60(4), 570-585.

Stott, N., Rollnick, S., Rees, M., & Pill, R. (1995). Innovation in clinical method: Diabetes care and negotiating skills. Family Practice, 12(4), 413-418.

2001 Training for Trainers

The next training for new trainers will be held in Santa Margherita, near Genova Italy, on June 7-9, at the Regina Elena Hotel. The MINT meeting will be held there as well and will overlap with the TNT. Applications and registration forms for both events will be available on the website, motivationalinterview.org.

Regional MINT Meetings

Please let us know if you are holding a regional MINT meeting.

Tele-training????

Robert Rhode

Several of us at the University of AZ are scheduled to provide training in motivational interviewing to substance abuse counselors who work in the rural areas of AZ. These rural counselors typically do not receive continuing education because of the distance to the major cities where trainings are often scheduled. This training has the luxury of 15 hours spaced across 5 months (Jan to May, 2001) with each training session being 3 hours. The training has the luxury or hindrance (we don't know yet) of being delivered by compressed video. This is a television broadcast that goes out over dedicated phone lines. It allows for the remote viewing sites to respond live and to ask questions. The interchange is not so smooth as to allow comfortable conversations but the audience can respond spontaneously. The broadcast is also substantially less expensive than satellite broadcasts so the audience can engage in activities at their remote sites without the pressure of using all the airtime to lecture or present from the studio. We also hope to compare the video training with an in-person training using the same content and format.

The audience member's knowledge before and after the broadcasts will be used to determine if motivational interviewing can be learned this way. In addition, about 30 of the 160 audience members will be providing audiotapes of actual sessions with their clients before, immediately after, and 4 months after the broadcasts. These audiotapes will be coded using the Motivational Interviewing Skill Code (Miller, 2000) to determine if any changes

occurred in using motivational interviewing skills. In addition, the clients of these counselors will be asked to comment on the counselor's behavior during the counseling session using the Working Alliance Inventory.

The Use of Motivational Interviewing Techniques in Offending Behaviour Group Work

Mark Farrall

Summary

This article covers some of the proposed Forensic applications of Motivational Interviewing (MI) with reference to group work contexts. It briefly describes actual techniques, discusses some of the difference between mainstream MI and Forensic MI and speculates upon some of the possible advantages of the latter.

Introduction

Baim & Roberts (1999) describe the approach taken within Middlesex Probation Service with sex offenders expressing extreme denial around their offences. The conceptualization of denial originating in Motivational Interviewing (MI) is discussed - i.e. that denial is a normal part of the process of change and of examining difficult behaviours - and the ways in which the philosophy of Motivational Interviewing has application to this specific sexual offender group. The authors do not go on however to outline the relevance of a Motivational Interviewing approach to other forensic group work settings, nor explore the practical techniques which may be used. This article will therefore present an exploration and arguments for the former and examples of the latter.

Motivational Interviewing is becoming more familiar within the Probation Service, particularly in one to one settings such as initial assessments or initial meetings. It is also beginning to be implemented within the Prison Service Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP), particularly with reference to the pre treatment groups of offenders who share many of the denial characteristics described by Baim & Roberts (1999).

A mass of empirical evidence demonstrates that in non Criminal Justice settings one of the most important factors affecting positive client outcomes is therapist characteristics (Luborsky, McLellan, Woody, O'Brien & Auerbach 1985). Behaviours which are usually seen as indicative of low motivation in clients, such as nonattendance, non-engagement, non-completion of tasks, and denial - are in fact heavily determined by therapist behaviours. (Miller, Taylor & West 1980).

(1999) has demonstrated that confronting sex offenders with their offences too early - a confrontation which can take the shape of seemingly educative victim empathy scenarios - can actually have a reverse effect to improving empathy, i.e. it can make the individual more entrenched in their distortions or victim stance. Such behaviour is often seen as classic denial, and often put down to the individual as an inherent personality trait; yet even the most cursory functional analysis of such resistance behaviour - just what does the behaviour achieve for the individual - will suggest that such denial is performing a part in maintaining the offender¹s sense of self. Attempting to confront this denial simply generates a feedback loop of further denial by the offender as their self concept is threatened, and frustration for the worker, leading to further denial and frustration.

By contrast, Motivational Interviewing conceptualizes resistance as being primarily a product of the interpersonal reaction between worker/therapist and offender/client. The latter may certainly begin by expressing resistant

behaviours, but once these behaviours are expressed, what happens to them is mightily influenced by what the worker does, and not simply by what the client does.

Such a point may sound obvious, but one of the major insights taken away from some recent Forensic Motivational Interviewing training conducted by this author with prison officers in the private sector was that how you behave towards someone - i.e. an inmate - affects how they behave back towards you. In Motivational Interviewing terms this is the reciprocity principle, slightly reworking the biblical phrase into others do unto you as you have done unto them.

So what has all this to do with group work with offenders?

Firstly, a general point is raised about the characteristics of a successful group, i.e. one which promotes the greatest amount of (hopefully long term) change in offenders. Beech & Scott Fordham (1997) have shown that a primary factor which promotes such outcome is group cohesiveness and engagement by the group members with the group. Group cohesiveness is in turn facilitated by a group leader style which demonstrates the therapist characteristics mentioned above: these specifically being positive regard and respect for the individual(s), warmth, and a non judgmental attitude. Workers or therapists having these characteristics are demonstrated and described as being effective with client groups from female sex offenders to male drug users (Van Bilsen 1991, Kinder Matthews 1993).

Within the Prison Service, variations in outcome for offenders on the Sex Offender Treatment Program have been shown to be strongly related to the interpersonal therapist style of the Tutors (Mulloy, Serran & Marshall 1999). This includes significant changes in Perspective Taking, or victim empathy (Fernandez, Serran & Marshall 1999).

These worker characteristics, and the necessary cohesive group atmosphere, can in turn be developed by the use of Motivational Interviewing

techniques and an understanding of the spirit of MI. The analogy usually used is that the techniques are the words of the song but the spirit provides the music. Both are impoverished without the other, and both can facilitate the development of the other. Workers can also be trained in both when the Motivational Interviewing approach is specifically adapted to the forensic context.

The core skills of Motivational Interviewing, developed as a one to one counseling technique, also apply to the group work situation: reflective listening and summaries can continue to aid offenders in exploring the meaning of their behaviour and resolving their ambivalence toward something which may be both very rewarding and very self destructive. Discrepancies between expressed wishes and actual behaviour can be widened, strengths clarified and motivation to change developed. In effect, these are cognitive therapy techniques (Beck & Freeman 1990) fully in line with Home Office recommendations for group work practice (Home Office 1997) but which arguably avoid the sterility many practitioners feel accredited programs exhibit.

Baim & Roberts (1999) mention the Prochaska & Diclemente Transtheoretical Cycle of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente 1982). Although Prochaska & Diclemente have made various adaptations to the model over time, so that for example, contemplation becomes extended or separated into early and late contemplation with associated cognitions and affective components of behaviour, we will stay with the cycle in the form with which most people are familiar.

In offending behaviour group work it seems to be the case that offenders most often present as being in precontemplation, i.e. their behaviour is not a problem to them, they have not begun to think about it. It is worth drawing attention here to the distinction drawn by Baim and Roberts (1999) between expressed motivation or position on the cycle and what the offenders internal or motivational state may really be; just as we cannot tell what is really 'going in[1] so we cannot tell what the offender really thinks, or is willing to express. This is the case with all offending behaviour work

and not just denier's sex offender groups.

Assuming that most members of a group are in the pre-contemplative phase then the group task becomes Phase 1 work in MI jargon, the necessary .exploration of behaviour and the processes of change mentioned above. This is a vital precursor to Phase II, which is far more concerned with actually negotiating plans for change after the need for change has been established by the client and not the practitioner; issues of autonomy and personal agency, always important in MI are even more crucial when dealing with offenders.

We will now look at some practical applications which transform the verbal techniques of Motivational Interviewing into more active applications suitable for use with groups.

Within a Motivational Interviewing framework, readiness to change is seen as a product of the two below factors.

In mainstream MI these can be assessed verbally through the use of scaling questions. This is simply asking something along the lines of "If, regarding making this change, 10 were very important and 1 were not important at all, where would you place yourself?" In the group context, this can be done in a more active manner through the use of Continuums. Simply place a chair or other marker at one side of the room and another opposite it some distance away, and designate one as ten and one as zero. Invite the group members to place themselves where they feel they are with regard to the issue. This information can then be processed using MI techniques, and the format allows a three dimensional representation of individuals' positions. Discussion may cause individuals to literally move. The same technique can be applied to confidence or even to readiness itself.

If practitioners are already using this technique with reference to other issues, this demonstrates a great strength of MI: it is an approach and communication style derived from and based upon what effective practitioners with superior client outcomes actually do, rather than beginning from theory. Thus, as an effective practitioner, it is

possible to be working in a way which is congruent with the principles of Motivational Interviewing (through probably lacking the specific techniques) without having ever directly come in contact with the formalization of these principles which is MI.

Three chairs: present, past and future

This is a more involved exercise which provides a practical application of verbal MI techniques for exploring the provenance and antecedents of behaviour. Place one chair before the group and ask for a volunteer. The chair represents the here and now or "Present" of whatever that person[1]s situation is regarding the problematic behaviour. The individual's understanding is then elicited through the use of MI strategies and with the addition of bringing in other group members input.

A second chair is then placed some distance to the side of the first and the participant invited (not told - see Jenkins 1990) to move to that chair. This chair then becomes the "Past", i.e. a time before the behaviour became a problem or when things were going well. Exploration of what this chair represents may include: what is the time gap between this Past chair and the Present chair? What was it like in the past when the issue was not an issue? What are the differences between there and the Present chair?

When sufficient exploration has taken place the individual moves back to the Present and a brief summary follows. They then are asked to move to a third chair - the Future - and further exploration facilitated before returning to their Present.

The physicality of this technique (which is also suitable for one to one work) appears to aid thinking from the various perspectives; the use of an actual physical base for the abstract thought is related to the one step removed approach described by Baim & Roberts (1999) and which shares many of the strengths of drama therapeutic, psychodramatic or drama in education approaches (Jennings 1987, 1992, Moreno 1985, Johnson & O[1]Neil 1984).

What is forensic motivational interviewing?

Much probation work nowadays is within a group context. This is an obvious departure from the one to one origins of MI. Even in a one to one situation this author would argue that the forensic uses of the approach are sufficiently different to require a specifically adapted variant - a Forensic Motivational Interviewing.

Firstly, counselors who use MI in more mainstream situations observe that their clients - when the issue is drink, drug use or other health related issues - are at least usually willing to talk about it. Though offending may be part of their clients' life, more often it is not. By contrast the experience of many workers in the Criminal Justice System is that work on offending behaviour is often like pulling teeth.

Secondly, the type of resistance experienced by Criminal Justice System workers differs somewhat from that which counselors have mainly described to this author. Although counselors too encounter denial it appears not to be the usual and predominant reaction of their clients, and the personal hostility experience by Criminal Justice workers is seemingly far less apparent. Thus for Criminal Justice workers, hostility and explicit denial become the most frequent resistance behaviours encountered, both of which are particularly difficult and draining to deal with.

A further difference may be focus of the interaction. While with counselors, health workers, and probation officers the focus is often fairly clearly meant to be on the problem behaviour, for a group such as prison officers interactions with inmates are usually part of the daily round of living together.

The time scale of Criminal Justice System work may also be very different. While counselors may have up to two years of hour long weekly sessions or more, prison officers may have only five minutes on an irregular basis. Probation officers in group work are obviously limited in how much time they can spend on an individual in a particular session and may be limited to duration of the course: domestic violence groups of eight or ten men which meet for two hours once a week for ten weeks do not allow a lot of individual focus.

Fifthly, pure Motivational Interviewing does make extremely effective use of open questioning, but decidedly concentrates on the reflection and summary aspects of the interaction or interview. By contrast, Forensic MI as developed by this author utilizes various specific questioning techniques such those taken from the cognitive interview used by the police (Memon & Bull 1991). This raises a further and unusual training issue in that one of the prime traps in MI is falling into the role of the expert who asks all the questions and provides all the solutions, thus blocking communication.

Finally, Criminal Justice workers describe having to wear two hats. By this prison officers mean that one minute they may be the respectful, empathic listeners facilitating the exploration of behaviour change (and be doing so leaning on a railing in a noisy wing) and the next they may have to be asserting the rules and discipline of the prison or physically restraining an inmate. A similar situation (though hopefully not the restraints!) is often experienced by probation officers. Though counseling applications of MI also obviously have boundary issues, the differences are possibly not so stark.

Potential benefits of forensic MI

If a group worker or other Criminal Justice professional is walking the talk of their Forensic MI practice fully in tune with the spirit then they should be modeling a pro social way of being at all times. Since modeling is one of the most potent forms of social learning (Bandura 1969) there are obvious advantages to this when dealing with people who may be suffering from a number of anti-social deficits. Further, although offending behaviour groups often concentrate - inevitably - on the negative aspects of the undesirable behaviour it is just as, if not more important to provide a positive behavioural alternative. From domestic violence work, the Duluth model's Wheel of Equality is as crucial as the Power & Control Wheel in exploring and changing offending behaviour. As noted, having equality

and respect embodied in a group facilitator aids group cohesiveness and positive outcomes, and can be a powerful learning aid.

The above point may link to on-going research regarding attachment style of offenders; it is possible that the type of modeling and consequent emotional support described above may go some way to remedying offenders' ways of relating (attachment style) which effect their offending (Fonagy, Lee, Steele, Steele, Kennedy, Mattoon, Target & Gerber 1996).

Another potential benefit is that as a humanistically based approach (see Buhler & Allen 1972). Motivational Interviewing always emphasizes the autonomy and personal responsibility of the client; this means much of the self-imposed burden of responsibility for change often felt by probation officers can be taken away, with consequent reductions in stress. Stress is potentially further reduced by the reduction of the degree of hostility faced in group situations. If difficult issues are being explored in the MI based manner described above, offenders find it very difficult to maintain high levels of hostility: they simply have nothing to push against or feed off.

This author is involved in a training initiative within the private prison sector to train officers in Forensic MI techniques. Although beginning with those officers having a more specialized function such as involvement in drug work or suicide prevention, the ultimate aim is to train all officers in contact with inmates in these techniques. The potential for altering the dynamic of the prison and creating a situation with more therapeutic potential than is often associated with prisons are immense. A practical example is that counselors within the establishment report no difficulties in dealing with inmates who show indications of personality disorder, while officers are often continually in head to head situations with these same people.

While some of this is doubtless due to differing roles and expectations on the part of both officer and inmates, one is forced to wonder just what level of understanding the officers have of how their behaviour affects others, and what their levels of skill in the type of communication

techniques described above may be. An evaluation process will hopefully be able to capture any changes following this initiative.

In conclusion, the Forensic potential of Motivational Interviewing, which has been in use in the addictions field for some ten to fifteen years, is only just beginning to be utilized in the field of Criminal Justice. The further development of Forensic MI as a philosophical and practical approach to behaviour change in offenders promises to be both exciting and productive.

A New Stages of Change Exercise

Arild Opheim, the Bergen Clinics Foundation

Some of the advantages of being linked to a network of trainers, are the opportunities to benefit from others' ideas, suggestions and experiences concerning teaching MI. In this way, hopefully, teaching MI will continue to develop, improve and prosper. This I think is congruent with the best MI-spirit. No fixed recipe, but rather an invitation to have a closer look at, try out, what others seem to have found applicable to MI teaching.

This exercise I am about to present is coherent with "Stages of Change", and one of its purposes is to try to narrow the gap between the model itself and the workshop participants' everyday professional lives.

Following a lecture on Stages of Change the participants are divided into smaller groups, preferably more than five in each group due to a demanding exercise. Each group is then encouraged to describe a client in a certain stage of the process. The description is supposed to envisage how the client behaves, what he says and how he presents himself. Each group is also supposed to present how their described client affects them as advisers or counselors, how they react, what they think and what they do in these encounters.

One from each group presents the groups' contribution on a flip-over or overhead, blackboard or whatever, to all the other

participants. The few times we have managed to apply this exercise, it is so new to us, we have focused on pre contemplation and contemplation stages. This has a bit to do with us working in the addiction field, and usually these are the stages the clients occupy when we meet them. It has also something to do with the time available on a workshop.

In this way, as described above, for instance two groups present a precontemplator and two groups a contemplator. As mentioned, this is a practical solution, you can of course have each group present a client from a different stage. The workshop leaders' task during these presentations is to reflect and summarize and compare each contribution with its respective stage in the model.

Finally, all of the groups' presentations hang side by side for all to see, and we can compare client behavior and counselors reactions and discuss various options in order to increase the clients' likely to change, move a stage further. Sometimes the best thing to do, might be to stabilize the client in his current stage, and at other times, it might be opportune to try your best to move the client to the next stage; and how to accomplish all this. Beware that at this point in the debriefing there might come some requests for role-play demonstrations. The participants' evaluations of this exercise have been satisfactory to us, and they especially appreciated the way their own feelings and reactions in meeting these clients were taken into consideration.

We look forward to hearing from you on this, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Report from Scandinavia

Tore Bortveit   Tom Barth

Nine MI-trainers from Norway and Sweden met at MINTie Christina Näsholms picturesque hostel and conference center, "Gamla Skolan" on the beautiful small island Reso on the west coast of Sweden. Four Norwegian trainers, all form the Bergen group and five Swedes from Stockholm and Reso spent three days together in a very pleasant mixture of hard work and leisure in a happy and relaxed atmosphere. In addition to work in such beautiful surroundings as the Bohuslän coastline, the group had a good time together biking around the island, doing a coastline boat trip watching seals, enjoying the excellent food at the local restaurant and singing Swedish folksongs in the pit-dark starry late summer night.

Christina hosted the meeting and planned it together with Tom Barth and me. One of our most important ideas for this gathering of trainers was to actually **do** training together and not just talk about training issues and experiences. Christina invited a group of trainees to come to our meeting for a single day follow-up. Our task as trainers was then to train Christina's group (16 persons) for one whole day. We split into two smaller groups, and we also split the trainees into two groups. One group consisted of people working in the probation system, the other group was mixed.

The trainers spent most of Wednesday afternoon planning the Thursday's training event. In doing this we discussed and focused on the idea of training MI in accordance with the principles of MI. How to train MI in a manner that makes what you teach and how you teach it congruent. Another issue was how to get feedback from the trainees on how they are doing while training is done, and not after its done. We discussed ideas of how to arrange the training sessions in ways that makes feedback from trainees accessible during the sessions.

The trainees had in an application form on beforehand where they indicated what topics they felt were most useful for them to focus on. Not

surprisingly the majority of the probation folks had indicated that they wanted to focus on resistance issues. The other group wanted to focus on issues concerning the Stages of Change model.

Training was done by trainers working in pairs – and were simultaneously observed by two other trainers. The observers generated feedback from the trainees group. In this way different training methods, exercises and ideas were formulated, discussed, tried out, - and instantly evaluated by trainees and observers. The trainees were instructed to be in the moment as to what concerned the topics of training, and along side the moment concerning how they felt, reacted to and what they thought of the way they were trained. The groups seemed to manage to be aware these two parallel processes in the sessions. This format made it possible for a lot of interesting comments, reflections and reactions to be elicited from the trainees. Thus this way of doing it seems like a promising format for training trainers, discussing training and evaluating training.

Third day, Friday we debriefed Thursday,s happenings. We had a discussion on different MI training challenges in the Scandinavian countries. And Lars Forsberg did a brief revue of the Quebec mint-meeting.

What did we learn ?

We learned that one of the best ways to develop training skills is to do training together.
And when doing training together we also develop our own MI skills – listening and observing each other.

We learned a lot about the practice of MI in our discussions about matching reflections to the process of change. In the everyday clinical work we don't want to move clients onwards at all times. There is a time for moving and a time for waiting, a time for change and a time for stabilizing – and some times we have to wait for some external factor to be sorted out. So we need to differentiate the "stabilizing reflections" from the "change inducing reflections".

We learned that when working with the issue of resistance in an advanced trainee group it is important to focus on success and not on failure. We had them tell stories of very difficult conversations that had succeeded, and then analyzed these stories using the concepts of 'resistance'. This is the "solution focused" approach, and much better that talking about resistance in terms of "impossible cases".

And we learned – or became increasingly aware of – that trainees learn most from training in "the borderland" of their own self-efficacy. If you try to train something completely new, they have trouble with integrating the new things with existing skills (and they don't learn very much), and if you try to train something that they already believe they know how to do, then they just go on doing what they have always done (and don't learn very much).

The forum decided to try to arrange similar meeting at Reso next year in August. The Reso– seminar is thereby a reality. The general feeling we all shared was that this event was useful, inspiring and fun. We all left Reso with a big smile on our tired faces.

Thanks again to Christina our excellent host.

MINUET Contributions

As a reminder, MINTies, subscribers (and others interested in MI) are invited to submit pieces for the MINUET. Remember that it doesn't have to be perfect. MINTies consistently state that hearing from other trainers is one of their greatest desires for this newsletter. So, send it on in.

Important MINT Dates

Submission	Publication
4/1/01	5/1/01
8/1/01	9/1/01
12/1/01	1/1/02

From the Editor, seeking the sun

Denise Ernst

As I look back over the past year I realize that I have been very privileged to be exposed to the work of such a great group of people through my involvement with MI and MINT. Several things really stand out.
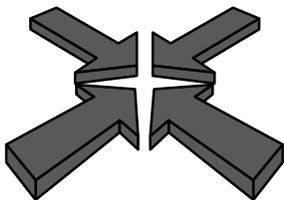
There is a tremendous amount of integrity that is driving this work. It shows up in the discussions we have, the research we do, and the clinical work we are involved in. Steve and Bill modeled that integrity and it seems to be a core value of the group. Members of the group seem ready to listen to others, willing to interpret their results honestly, and able to engage in the intricate process of self-evaluation. To me, this has not been the norm in the professional community and I really appreciate it.

I would guess that another core value of the group is the commitment to quality and the improvement of the work. There is a strong desire to understand how people learn these skills and how we can be better teachers. The sharing that happens in our meetings as well as through the list serve and newsletter helps to accomplish that. In the research community, the interest in making sure that we represent accurately what we are doing has grown substantially. The discussions about the coding system, the key elements of MI, what to call those pesky brief interventions, and just what is this thing called "spirit" will all serve to improve our understanding of why and when this works.

Finally, this group seems to value relationship. I have seen long-standing, collaborative, mutually beneficial, and rewarding professional and personal relationships develop in this group. I have grown a lot from my association with members of this group and look forward to finding opportunities to work together. New, creative, and exciting work is stimulated by the presence of relationship. There is a trust and a caring that transcends ideology and even personal beliefs that expands our vision and creates new synapses. This is when "breakthroughs" are possible. I see this group breaking through, with integrity and quality. I am honored to be a part of it.

Happy New Year.