Intrinsic Change
Training for Helping Professionals

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Motivational Interviewing Glossary

Quick reference

Definition

A particular way of talking with people about change and growth to strengthen their own motivation and commitment.

Spirit

Term	Meaning
Spirit	Mind and heart MI is practiced in
Partnership	Collaborate with client's expertise
Acceptance	Absolute worth, accurate empathy, affirmation, autonomy support
Compassion	Prioritize client's welfare and needs
Empowerment	Client's own strengths, motivation, autonomy (was evocation)

Four tasks

Term	Meaning
Tasks	Engaging, focusing, evoking, planning (were processes)
Engaging	Build trusting, respectful relationship
Focusing	Find direction for change
Evoking	Draw out client's own motivation
Planning	Build a plan client will carry out
Choosing a path	Step back, pick a direction among options (was agenda mapping)
Clarifying	Shared picture of situation and next steps (was formulation)
Path mapping	Choose among routes to a goal

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Core skills

Term	Meaning
OARS	Open questions, affirmations, reflections, summaries
Open question	Wide latitude to answer
Closed question	Yes/no or short answer
Affirmation	Values a client strength or effort; simple or complex
Simple reflection	Little added beyond client's words
Complex reflection	Adds meaning; a guess
Double-sided reflection	Sustain talk + change talk, joined by "and"
Amplified reflection	Reflects with more intensity
Continuing the paragraph	Offer the next unspoken sentence
Summary	Pulls together 2+ client statements
Collecting summary	Gathers related items
Linking summary	Connects now with earlier talk
Transitional summary	Wraps up, signals a shift
Bouquet	Summary of change talk
Recapitulation	Bouquet at shift to planning
Key question	After recap; invites mobilizing talk

Change talk

Term	Meaning
Change talk	Client speech toward change
Preparatory (DARN)	Desire, ability, reason, need
Mobilizing (CAT)	Commitment, activation, taking steps
Desire	Want, wish, like
Ability	Can, could, able
Reason	If-then motive

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Term	Meaning
Need	Need, have to, must
Commitment	Will, going to
Activation	Ready, willing, considering
Taking steps	Action already taken
Cultivating change talk	Drawing out change talk (was evoking change talk)
Evocative question	Natural answer is change talk
Elaboration	Ask for detail, example
Pendulum technique	Good things about status quo, then not-so-good (was running head start)
Querying extremes	Best outcome of change, worst of status quo
Looking back / forward	Better past; hoped-for future
Exploring goals and values	Most important goals, values
Planting seeds	Raise gap between status quo and goals (was developing discrepancy)
Rulers	0-10: importance, confidence

Sustain talk and discord

Term	Meaning
Resistance	Now sustain talk + discord
Sustain talk	Client speech for status quo
Discord	Strain in the relationship
Softening sustain talk	Lowering sustain talk without arguing (was responding to sustain talk)
Ambivalence	Motivations for and against, at once
Agreement with a twist	Agree, then reframe
Reframe	Invite a new interpretation
Coming alongside	Accept and reflect client's position

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Term	Meaning
Emphasizing autonomy	Client's choice and control
Shifting focus	Move to less contested topic
Apologizing	Take partial responsibility
Reactance	Pushing back when freedom feels threatened

Information and advice

Term	Meaning
Ask-offer-ask	Explore, offer, explore (was elicit-provide-elicit)
Permission	Client OK before advice
Prefacing	Autonomy statement before advice
Self-disclosure	Share something true and helpful
Neutrality	Explore options equally (equipoise)
Decisional balance	Equal pros and cons; for neutrality

Styles and traps

Term	Meaning
Directing	Telling, advising
Following	Listening, going along
Guiding	Between directing and following
Fixing reflex	Urge to set things right (was righting reflex)
Expert trap	Assuming you have the answers
Question-answer trap	Too many questions
Premature focus trap	Focusing before engaging
Labeling trap	Pushing a label
Blaming trap	Fault over change
Chat trap	Small talk without purpose

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Context and relationship

Term	Meaning
Genuineness	Inner experience matches outer expression; no professional mask (Rogers' congruence)
Socially engineered trauma	Harm from oppressive institutions and inequity
Macro MI	MI applied to systemic and socially engineered trauma (Avruch, Shaia)

Learning and fidelity

Term	Meaning
MITI	Codes practitioner MI fidelity
MISC	First MI coding system
MINT	Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers
TNT	Training New Trainers

Sources

Adapted from Glossary of Motivational Interviewing Terms (Miller & Rollnick, 3rd ed. supplement) and What's New (and Not New) in the 4th Edition of Motivational Interviewing by Jesse Jonesberg, MSW, LCSW, CPS

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