Motivational Interviewing Overview

**Simple definition:** Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change.

**Equipoise:** The counselor’s decision to counsel with neutrality in a way that consciously avoids guiding a client toward one particular choice or change and instead explores the available options equally.

**The four central components of the Underlying Spirit of MI:**

**Collaboration**- The counselor functions as a partner or companion, collaborating with the client’s own expertise.

**Acceptance**- The counselor communicates the aspects below:

- **Absolute Worth**- Prizing the inherent value and potential of every human being.
- **Accurate Empathy**- The skill of perceiving and reflecting back another person’s meaning.
- **Affirmation**- The counselor accentuates the positive, seeking and acknowledging a person’s strengths and efforts.

**Autonomy Support**- The counselor accepts and confirms the client’s irrevocable right to self-determination and choice.

**Compassion**- The counselor acts benevolently to promote the client’s welfare, giving priority to the client’s needs.

**Evocation**- The counselor elicits the client’s own perspectives and motivation.

**Four Fundamental Processes of MI:**

- **Engaging**- establishing a mutually trusting and respectful helping relationship.
- **Focusing**- clarifying a particular goal or direction for change.
- **Evoking**- eliciting the person’s own motivation for a particular change.
- **Planning**- developing a specific change plan that the client is willing to implement.

**The Core Skills utilized in the Four Processes of MI:**

**Asking Open Questions**- a question that offers the client broad latitude and choice in how to respond.

**Affirming**- the counselor accentuates the positive, seeking and acknowledging a person’s strengths and efforts.

**Reflective Listening**- the skill of “active” listening whereby the counselor seeks to understand the client’s subjective experience, offering reflections as guesses about the person’s meaning.

**Summarizing**- a reflection that draws together content from two or more prior client statements.

**Informing and Advising**- offered with permission and with understanding of the client’s perspective and needs to help them reach their own conclusions about the relevance of any information provided.