
THE SPIRIT OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

The easiest way to understand the spirit of motivational interviewing, is to think about a personal health issue that you need to discuss with a health professional. Think of a health issue about which you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. Now imagine you are about to see the health professional - what is it you would need from the health professional to help you to talk about your issue?

I would need the health professional to...

Now read the definitions of the four aspects of MI Spirit in the box on the right.
Sound familiar?

In our own experiences of health care, we know what it is like to have health professionals tell before they listen, to judge without compassion, and to dismiss our values, preferences and priorities.

The spirit of motivational interviewing is to truly embrace a way of being with patients that is collaborative, compassionate, accepting and evocative of a person's own motivation for change.

In short, we need to work with the patient's perspective.

Counselling microskills are used to reflect MI spirit in conversations with patients, particularly conversations about change:

O – Open questions about change.

A – Affirmations of strengths, skills, qualities.

R – Reflections to demonstrate empathy and understanding

S – Summaries to help patients see the whole picture and support making decisions

See the information sheet “Microskills for MI” for more information.

The four aspects of MI Spirit



PARTNERSHIP

Work together as equals.



ACCEPTANCE

Honour the patient's worth and autonomy with accurate empathy and affirmation.



COMPASSION

Work in the patient's best interest.



EVOCATION

Draw out what already lies within the patient; their resources and motivation.
