

TREATMENT
ENCOURAGEMENT
RESPONSIBILITY

Importance, Confidence

ENFORCEMENT
CONFRONTATION
PUNISHMENT

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Historically, motivation has been viewed as something that resides within the offender. Probation and parole officers hope for enough motivation to make some progress but often end up frustrated when they find very little. Regardless of amount, motivation has usually been thought to be a characteristic of the offender — it's theirs to give ("cooperative," "workable") or theirs to withhold ("resistant," "poor attitude"). Within this model, the officer becomes an enforcer of a legal contract, but not necessarily an active participant in the behavior change of the offender. Here is a common description of an officer's role:

The probationer, in consultation with his lawyer, negotiates for probation supervision (and conditions) in lieu of jail time. In our initial meeting, and throughout our work together, I tell the probationer what is expected of him and make it clear what the penalties will be should he fail to comply. We have regular meetings to verify that he is making progress on his conditions and I answer any questions he might have. If he breaks the law or shows poor progress on his conditions, I see to it that appropriate sanctions are assessed. Throughout the process, the probationer is well aware of the behavior that might send him to jail, and if he ends up there, it's his own behavior that gets him there.

Reflected in this statement is an officer who is essentially *cut out of the change process*, except as an observer. Motivational Interviewing (MI) brings officers back into the "business of behavior change" (Clark, 2006). It champions the idea that we don't have to wait for the offender to "get motivated" — motivation is interactive. There may be quite a lot we can do to raise motivation, even during brief interactions.

and Readiness to Change

Motivational Interviewing for Probation and Parole

Understanding Motivation

How we understand motivation will directly affect what we do (or don't do) to increase it. Understanding motivation involves five important issues:

1. Motivation is changeable. Motivation is not a fixed trait like height or eye color; it can be increased or decreased. Although there will always be some factors that are out of our control, there may be quite a lot we can do to raise motivation.

2. Motivation predicts action. Motivation predicts how likely an offender will begin an action and carry through with it. Motivation to change is not a guarantee of action, but it does predict the likelihood that a client will change. Because of this, motivation is fundamental to behavior change.

3. Motivation is behavior-specific. To say an offender is "unmotivated" in a global sense (as a personality description) is to misunderstand how motivation works. For example, an offender may not be motivated to "stop drinking" but may feel the need to work on their anger. They may be reluctant to comply with a certain condition of their probation, yet have a strong desire to "get off probation." >>>

4. Motivation is interactive. Motivation changes because of relationships between people. Exchanges between the officer and probationer have the potential to increase or decrease the offender's perceived importance and confidence for change. The questions and statements that an officer chooses can influence what an offender talks and thinks about, and subsequently *how he behaves*.

5. Motivation can be affected by both internal and external factors, but internally motivated change usually lasts longer. Consider two offenders who agree to complete a substance abuse evaluation. One agrees to the evaluation to avoid jail, while the other agrees because he is concerned that his drug use is causing family problems. Both may be compliant, but the second is more likely to make changes that lower the probability that he will engage in future criminal behavior. Research repeatedly finds that internally motivated change is far more enduring over time (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Viets, et al., 2002).

Given the right situation, most probation and parole officers would strive to help offenders towards behavior change, — but few are equipped with the right tools. Simple notions of what things “should” motivate offenders are often insufficient. Change, when it happens, seems to be the result of a combination of factors — a sort of motivational “alignment” — rather than increased levels of just one factor.

The findings regarding motivation suggest at least four conclusions¹:

1. In community corrections, the interaction between a probation officer and offender can have a large impact on a offender's motivation. The way an officer interacts with an offender can raise or lower motivation.
2. Often, the things that we assume would be motivating to an offender simply are not. Thus, motivation is a process of finding out what things are most important to a particular individual, as well as what plan will work best for attaining them.
3. Not all moments are created equally. There seem to be “teachable” windows where people are more receptive to feedback from their environment and more interested in trying out new behaviors. Looking for where the momentum *is*, rather than where it *is not*, seems to be a sensible first step.
4. A desire to achieve an outcome (importance), belief that it can be achieved (confidence), and a belief that the new behavior is freely chosen (autonomy), seem to be the optimal conditions for change.

The Spirit Of Motivational Interviewing – Embracing a helpful style

No two offenders are alike — they enter our probation departments and parole agencies with a complex array of different experiences, traits, values and personality styles. So if offenders come in, each with their

individual characteristics, what conclusion could be reached if one heard mainly arguing and resistance talk coming from any one probation office or cubicle? It would stand to reason that it is not the offenders who are responsible for the negative responses but rather the officer's approach. Probation/parole officer style can be a major determining factor whether the offender comes down on the side of resistance, or alternately, increases their readiness to change during meetings. An officer's “style” is simply the way they relate to offenders. As noted in the first of this two-part series (Clark, 2006) one style can be “tough-as-nails” and coercive while another style can be more encouraging and motivational.

Consider this example of officer style. In departments where intake and supervision are separated, supervising officers report that the ease or difficulty of their first meeting with a new probationer or parolee is heavily influenced by what happened during the intake interview. An officer from a small probation department gave this description:

For the initial appointment, I can predict what kind of attitude the offender will show up with depending on which of the two intake officers this person met with. If I see one name, I know the person will be reluctant to come in and I'll spend a portion of my time trying to undo all of the damage that has been done. If I see the other name, not only do I know the client will show, I know I will have a hard time living up to the positive image that this person created of a probation officer. It's like night and day—actually, more like heaven and hell!

These differences are due to staff “style.” The second intake officer seems to have embraced a style that best aligns with this Motivational Interviewing (MI) spirit. The spirit of MI (Miller & Rollnick, 2002) boils down to three components, collaboration, evocation and autonomy:

- **Collaboration.** Partnership is key to increase motivation. This spirit of MI is to explore rather than press, to support rather than argue. Compliance can occur without the offender feeling understood and respected — the same cannot be said if one wants to induce behavior change. We create a respectful partnership with an offender, not because we disregard their illegal behaviors, but rather because it creates the necessary climate for lasting change.
- **Evocation.** We have always relied heavily on “telling,” educating and reasoning. However, this approach has more to do with eliciting and “pulling out” from the offender rather than installing or “putting in.” When working for behavior change, we set aside the traditional probation role of the dominating expert who tells the submissive recipient how to change. We want the offender in an active-speaking role, rather than a passive-listening role.
- **Autonomy.** Change is more likely to occur when the person feels



that he or she is in charge of their own behavior, that what he or she does is by their own choice. In general, if people think that they are making changes for their own reasons, they are more likely to stick with new behaviors. Too much pushing can actually make people less likely to change.

A Road Map For Motivational Interviewing

Completing a brief examination of motivation, how might an officer raise motivation levels? Moyers & Waldorf (2004) offer a helpful analogy of a “map” to describe how to “do” Motivational Interviewing. A seasoned traveler would want to (1) pick a destination, (2) use a roadmap to decide directions and (3) be attentive to potential trouble spots along the way.

(1). The Destination: The Principles of Motivational Interviewing

The goal of any probation/parole officer’s actions is to “arrive” at these principles. Aside from the compliance tasks of gathering information and documenting adherence to court or parole board orders, any efforts to motivate an offender will land an officer at these principles—they represent the “destination.” These principles include:

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

Express Empathy

Motivational Interviewing involves a sincere attempt on the part of the officer to understand the offender’s point of view and to understand that the offender has a choice in how they respond to supervision orders and officer directions. Aside from understanding, empathy also involves an effort to draw out concerns and reasons for change from the client, holding back the urge to push the officer’s own agenda. Our field has had several decades of viewing offender motivation solely from our perspective. McMurrin (2002) notes, “A different and potentially more useful perspective is to look at motivation to change from *the offender’s point of view*” (p.5 – emphasis added). Empathy and reflective listening are frequently a core part of counseling, negotiation, and sales techniques.

Roll with Resistance

Since motivation has been viewed more like a fixed offender trait, some officers have thought that the best strategy is to directly confront the offender’s denial, rationalization, and excuses.

- You’ve got a problem.
- You have to change.
- If you violate, you’ll go back to jail. Is that what you want?

Other staff shy away from a heavy-handed approach, instead relying on suggestions or logic to persuade the offender.

- Can’t you see how this behavior is affecting your kids?
- Why don’t you just...
- Here’s how you should go about this...

Past suggestions to probation staff (Clark, 1996) have cautioned, “Do not argue or debate with the offender. You are not likely to change their mind through reasoning. If this approach was going to work, it would have worked by now.”

Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that both of these strategies, especially early on, tend to make things worse. When confronted with external pressure, the typical response is to defend the current negative behavior or troublesome situation.

Officer Confronts	Offender Resists
<i>You’ve got a problem because...</i>	<i>No, I don’t because...</i>
<i>Why don’t you...</i>	<i>That won’t work for me because...</i>
<i>If you don’t you’ll...</i>	<i>My friend did and he...</i>

Motivational Interviewing suggests, “Confrontation is the goal, but not the style.” What that means is confrontation is the goal for many probation interactions—helping an offender see and accept an uncomfortable situation. That would be done, however, with a motivational strategy rather than through a style of force or argument. MI gives us the option of turning away from confrontational or logic-based approaches, while still keeping the focus on change. We can, and should enforce the appropriate legal sanctions, but for long-term change, it is better if the confrontation is between the probationer *and their own issues* (discrepancy), rather than the officer and probationer (coercion).

Develop Discrepancy

The best interaction is one in which the offender voices the arguments for change. How does an officer facilitate this? The first step is to build a positive and collaborative relationship (express empathy). A positive relationship creates a place of trust where offenders can feel more comfortable talking about change. Given a positive working relationship, we then move to find out what the person values, and if their current behavior is in conflict with these deeply-held values. If there is a gap between what they value and their current behavior, this gap is called “discrepancy.” This gap becomes fertile ground for discovering and amplifying *the offender’s own reasons for change*. The officer looks for ways to create an “appetite” for change. >>>

Considering the *Stages of Change* theory (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983), some offenders will enter probation or parole in the precontemplation stage, not believing that there is any reason to change. A few more enter supervision in the preparation or action stage, having acknowledged the problem during the first appointment and needing only minimal assistance to begin change efforts. Throughout this process, ambivalence is an internal battle between “I want to do this, but I know I shouldn’t.” These mixed feelings are a normal part of the change process.

Staff have long been taught to see ambivalence as a classic form of “denial,” yet for the motivationally-inclined officer it demonstrates a reason for optimism! Rather than being a sign that a person is moving away from change, ambivalence is a signal that change may be on the horizon. *Ambivalence makes change possible — it is the precursor to positive behavior change.*

Offenders can change if they can successfully negotiate this ambivalence. The balance tips to one side or the other. The challenge therefore, is to identify and call attention to this ambivalence. There will be a small percentage of offenders who have no ambivalence around their current behavior. However, the large majority of offenders will enter our departments with a certain amount of concern regarding their behavior (if only about the legal consequences). Where the discrepancy goes depends on whether an officer recognizes and uses it to elicit self-motivational speech.

Support Self-Efficacy

Part of motivation is an estimate of how likely we are to succeed if we wanted to change. Obviously, people who are discouraged about their chances are less likely to attempt change. If you’ve raised someone’s value of importance to change by negotiating ambivalence and invoking a discrepancy in their thinking, change is still not certain. Even if you’ve found the importance to change, you remain stuck if you have no *confidence* in your abilities to carry out the change. For this reason, we go out of our way to remind the offender of personal strengths and resources, and support him or her through encouraging statements and finding past successes.

In the face of so many problems and failures by offenders, how does the officer find optimism to believe in the offender’s ability to change — and help the offender to believe in themselves as well? Many probation and parole departments are turning to a more positive, constructive way of solving problems. The Strengths Perspective (Saleebey, 1997) and Positive Psychology (Seligman, 1998) first developed in the fields of social work and psychology have made the transition into juvenile justice (Clark, 1996, 1998; Kurtz & Linnemann, 2006), adult community corrections (Clark, 1997) and prisoner reentry programming (Maruna & Lebel, 2003; Burnett & Maruna, 2006). This approach seeks to

find a better balance of amplifying strengths rather than a sole focus on repairing weakness and fixing flaws. Community corrections has long been concerned with uncovering a person’s deficits, weaknesses, and problems. For so many offenders, their talents and abilities go unrecognized — and more importantly — *unused*.

Many offenders have developed survival skills that run opposite to what they might need to achieve. For example, the skills and behaviors that makes up a “good” parolee or probationer often fall under the category of compliance and “giving in” — yet compliant behaviors are rarely associated with achievement or growth, which often involve taking some risks and demonstrating personal choice and initiative (Rapp, 1998).

(2). Roadmap—Directions for Reaching the Destination

There are often many routes to arrive at the same destination. Plotting a course occurs with strategies and techniques, in much the same way as a driver decides which direction to take when faced with the many turns and forks in the road. A motivational roadmap includes:

- Decisional Balance
- Eliciting “Change Talk” (Self-Motivational Speech)
- Preparing People for Change

These “directions” keep the issues of change in focus. Bill Miller notes, “In most instances, people talk a little bit about changing, then a little bit about not changing and then they stop talking about change. Motivational Interviewing is a method for keeping change talk on the front burner.” (Miller, 2003)

Decisional Balance

There is a common sense view of motivation in that offenders do things because they perceive them as being better in some way than not doing them (West, 1989). From this position, it is easy to see motivation as a decision-making process. In this “What’s in it for me?” approach, offenders will try to anticipate whether a course of action is likely to be useful to them before they act, assessing both the positive and the negative consequences of a behavior. When individuals are confronted with two or more options, they will select the one that, relative to the other options, will provide the most benefit at the least cost (von Winterfeldt & Edwards, 1986).

The “Decisional Balance Sheet” can be a helpful tool for understanding the thinking, emotional, and motivational aspects of decision-making. With this decisional balance tool, the gains of starting a behavior change are contrasted with the costs of not undertaking the change. Decisional balance is a comparative model because it is not the total number of gains and losses that influences the decision but the number of gains and losses in relation to each other. What “tips”



Sample Decisional Balance Sheet – “my alcohol use”			
Continuing On As Before		Making a Change	
Benefits	Costs	Costs	Benefits
Helps me relax	Spouse gets mad	Won't have a way to relax	Family would trust me again
Feel like I fit in	Spend all my money	What about my friends?	Marriage would go better
Don't worry about my bills	Ended up here at this court	Life will be boring	Better at my job
Love the buzz	Suspended from my job		More money
			Get off probation sooner

the balance from one side to the other is not always logic, but rather a subjective appraisal made by the person.

Decisional balance sheets (Figure 1) are one way to frame such a dilemma. For instance, a simple way to broach the subject of change is to ask offenders about some of the “good things” and “not-so-good” things about a target behavior. The two questions can be asked of almost anyone, no matter what their interest in change. They’re also useful when an officer really doesn’t know what to say to an offender who has taken a very resistant stance.

- What are some of the good things about...?
- What are some of the not-so-good things about...?

First, the officer begins with an open question (usually asking about the “good things” first) and immediately follows with a reflection. The officer continues to ask open questions (e.g., “What else?”) until the offender has listed several items. Most offenders can list several items on both sides, and so the officer does not stop asking after the first or second item. Second, the officer does not shy away from asking about the “good things” about drug use. This officer is comfortable with

the fact that drug use, like all problem behaviors, has some positive aspects for the user. This offender who created the list above is ambivalent about drinking, seeing both pros and cons. This is despite the fact that he may have a no-drinking condition of probation or parole. Similarly, a sex offender may have mixed feelings around admitting to the offense, even though it is a condition of his probation. Third, the officer avoids labeling the behavior or using this exercise as a way to bully the offender into change. The questions invite the offender to talk on both sides of the issue; we strategically prompt the offender to give both sides of the argument.

In community corrections, it is important to be able to appreciate how internal and external forces work together to facilitate positive behavior. Because we work with a mandated population, change might begin because of external pressure (e.g., conditions of supervision), >>>

Motivational Continuum

1 10

Not Ready Unsure Very Ready

People come in with a certain range. What you say makes a difference from there.

but later can be continued for internal reasons (e.g., offender sees personal benefits). The process would ideally look something like, “I have to, I need to, I want to.” Officers can choose to use strategies that moves change to the “inside” or just as easily allow compliance to remain pressure-driven and superficial.

Eliciting “Change Talk” (Self-Motivational Speech)

People can literally “talk themselves in and out of change” (Walters, et al., 2002) and MI-inclined officers turn to skills that elicit “change talk.” There are linguistic studies that suggest that the speech of the staff person sets the tone for the speech of the client, which in turn, influences the ultimate outcome (Amrhein, et. al., 2003). In short, certain statements and questions—and especially a certain officer style—seem to predict whether people decide to change during brief conversations. Offenders may come in with a certain range of readiness, but what the officer says from that point on makes a difference in how the offender speaks and thinks, and ultimately, in how they choose to behave in the future.

Preparing People for Change

The old adage, “You can’t make a person change if they don’t want to,” is only partially true. In fact, there may be quite a lot you can do to prepare people to find a job, address chaotic family life, or give up substance abuse. The art lies in getting people to want to make changes in these areas. Frequently, officers want to jump straight to problem solving.

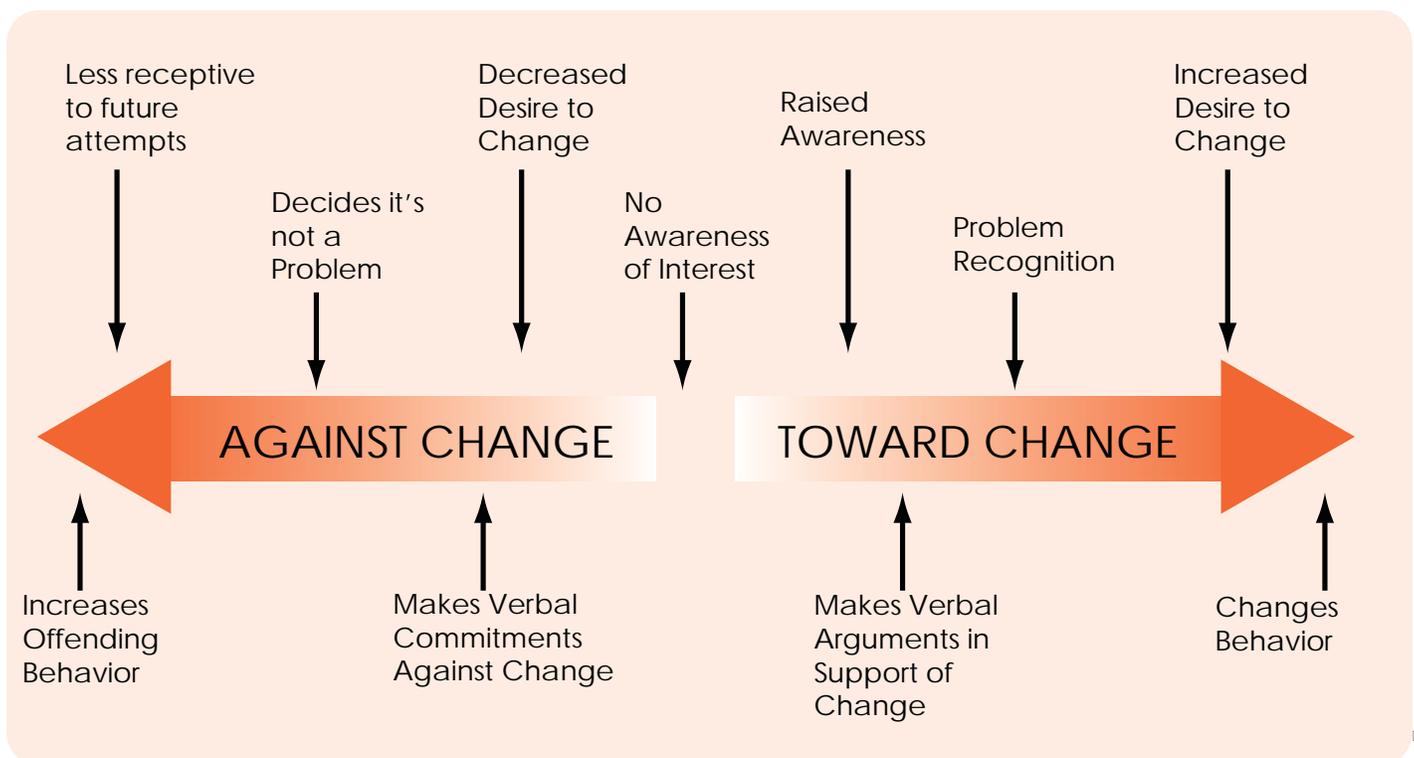
However, this approach ignores the fact that most people need to be prepared for change. This section talks about specific ways to prepare people to think about change. Motivational Interviewing trains staff in basic listening and speaking strategies:

- Ask Open Questions.
- Affirm Positive Talk and Behavior
- Reflect What You are Hearing or Seeing
- Summarize What has Been Said

These four techniques (sometimes referred to by the “OARS” acronym, for Open Questions, Affirm, Reflect, and Summarize) get an offender thinking about change, and help us to gather better quality information so we can assist the person in planning. They become an “accelerator” for conversations.

Figure 3 illustrates some of the markers that help to determine whether the interaction is a good one, that is, whether the offender is moving closer towards change.

Training in Motivational Interviewing offers instruction in ways of using these techniques to strategically steer a conversation in a particular direction. However, steering in itself is worthless without the ability to move the conversation forward. Many officers are dominating discussions with offenders and talking themselves out of effectiveness. Video-tape research (Clark, 2005) of offender/ officer appointments find many officers far “out-talk” offenders in short (15 minute) sessions. For example, in one particular session, there were 2,768 words spoken





between officer and offender. The breakdown? The officer spoke 2,087 words while the probationer was limited to only 681 words. Although listening by itself is no guarantee of behavior change, the ability to both listen while using strategies to get the offender talking, is a prerequisite to being an effective motivational interviewer.

(3) Potential Trouble Spots: Enforce Orders And Deliver Sanctions Without Leaving A Motivational Style

One of the things that make probation and parole officers unique is their conspicuously dual role. We help the offender to plan, but dispense sanctions if he fails; we ask for honesty, but also report to the court. Indeed, it is understandable why some officers have a hard time navigating this dual role. The tendency is to move to one side — to become too harsh or too friendly — when a more middle-of-the-road approach is called for. In reality, probation and parole officers are more like consultants, in that we manage the relationship between the court or paroling authority and the offender. This is not as far-fetched as some would believe. In truth, we neither make decisions for the offender or for the court or parole board. If we treat the position from the perspective of a consultant, we can avoid some of the pitfalls inherent in this dual role. Adopting this middle-of-the-road stance makes us not only an effective advocate for the court or parole board, but also allows us greater power to influence the actions of the offender.

Motivational Interviewing can make change more likely, but it is by no means a magic bullet. When violations occur, there are a couple of strategies for keeping a motivational edge.

1. Explain your dual roles (Become the “go-between”)

Motivational Interviewing encourages officers to be honest with offenders about all aspects of their supervision, including conditions, incentives, and sanctions. Officers should fully explain up front to the offender about their dual role—yet do so as someone who represents “both sides.” For instance:

I want to make you aware that I have a couple of roles here. One of them is to be the court’s representative, and to report on your progress on the conditions that the court has set. At the same time, I act as a representative for you, to help keep the court off your back and manage these conditions, while possibly making some other positive steps along the way. I’ll act as a “go-between”—that is, between you and the court, but ultimately you’re the one who makes the choices. How does that sound? Is there anything I need to know before proceeding?

2. Address Behavior with an “Even Keel” Attitude

Adopting a new approach like Motivational Interviewing is clearly a process. Even after an initial training, there is a common pitfall for many officers when compliance problems occur. At some point, if an offender remains ambivalent (e.g., lack of progress), they believe it makes sense to move out of a motivational style and switch over to more coercive and demanding strategies. Staff who initially found the benefits of motivational work will justify heavy-handed tactics — perceiving them to be a natural response to resistance, even remarking that difficult offenders seem to be “asking for it.” A critical idea is missed—*there is a difference between enforcing sanctions based on lack of progress, and switching styles to a more heavy handed approach.* One can enforce orders and assess sanctions as appropriate, >>>

Early studies of Motivational Interviewing attracted intense interest, as they were sometimes able to match the same amount of improvement in single sessions as compared to several months of outpatient work (Miller, et al., 1980; Chapman & Huygens, 1998). Linguists became interested and began to study the speech content of these motivational sessions. This is what makes this linguistic research so interesting for probation efforts—the majority of any interaction between officer and offender involves talking and conversation. Linguists studied the actual words spoken between staff and client that proved to determine positive behavior change. What they found were five conversation dimensions of desire, ability, reason, need and commitment talk. These conditions were placed in an easy-to-remember acronym of DARN-C:

- D**esire (I want to, prefer, wish)
- A**bility (I can, able, could, possible)
- R**easons (I should, why do it?)
- N**eed (I must, importance, got to)
- C**ommittment (I will, I’m going to...)

The researchers were quick to point out that not every dimension had to be voiced for behavior change to start. Simply getting the offender to verbalize one of the four constructs (DARN) might be enough. However, the same could not be said for Commitment—for it was Commitment talk that actually predicted behavior change. In training sessions, staff review these dimensions at length and learn the skills to elicit these important kinds of change talk.

without leaving motivational strategies behind.

Force, for all its bluster, can often make a situation worse. This is especially true when addressing violations. Offenders may already be on the defensive about their progress, and an agitated officer can make the offender's attitude worse. For this reason, we suggest that officers address violations with an "even keel" attitude, addressing the behavior, dispensing the appropriate sanction, but not getting agitated or taking the violation personally.

Motivationally-inclined officers offer their support — and their regrets — to the offender who might be considering a violation of the conditions of supervision:

PO: We've talked about this before. In another two weeks, you will be in violation of this court order. We have also talked about how it is up to you. You can certainly ignore this order but sanctions will be assessed.

Offender: "Darn right I can ignore it—this is so stupid!"

PO: "It seems unfair that you're required to complete this condition. It feels to you like it might be a waste of your time."

Offender: "Yeah. I can't believe I have to do this!"

PO: "It's important that I tell you that my (supervisor, judge, responsibilities, policy, position) will demand that I assess a consequence if it's not completed before the next two weeks."

Offender: "You don't have to report this."

PO: "Unfortunately, that's part of my job. I have to follow orders here. So, this will be something I'll have to do."

Offender: "You mean you can't just let it go?"

PO: "No, I don't have a choice. But—you have a choice, even if I don't. Is there anything we can do to help you avoid these consequences before the end of the month (next meeting, court deadline)?"

Offender: "I'll think about it, it just seems unfair."

A confrontational approach is always an option, but at this point simply recognizing the offender's reluctance, and fairly informing him or her about what is likely to happen, improves the likelihood that a decision for compliance will eventually overtake the emotions of the moment.

In this example, the officer refuses to leave the middle, neither defending the order, nor siding with the offender to stop the sanction. When it comes to the specific sanction, the officer defers to the court or parole board, and re-emphasizes a collaborative relationship: "How do we (you, significant others and myself) keep them (the judge, the parole board) off your back?" Finally, the officer emphasizes the offender's personal responsibility. Offenders don't have to complete their conditions; they always have the option of taking the sanction.

Motivational Interviewing steers clear of both the hard and soft approaches. The "hard" approach is overly-directive and defends the court or parole board's authority ("You better do this!", "Drop the attitude, you're the one who broke the law," "Don't blame the judge"). Less examined is the "soft" approach. This approach leaves the officer defending the offender, ("I won't tell this time — but don't do it again," "Do you know what the court or parole board would do if I brought this to their attention?"). A positive alliance is not the same as ignoring violations to keep a good relationship at any cost ("You better get it together or I'll have to do something"), nor is it the same as allowing the situation to become personal and attempting to "out-tough" the offender ("I'll lock you up!"). Both approaches miss the mark as they prevent the officer from occupying the "middle ground."

A motivational approach is about finding the middle ground as a consultant who works with both sides (the court/parole board and the offender). Officers can work in partnership with the offender, while still being true to their court roles. Officers can respect personal choice, but not always approve of the offender's behavior. By their skills and strategies, agents can supervise for compliance and, at the same time, increase readiness for change.

Conclusion

This two-part article series has made the call for the field of probation and parole to re-enter the "business of behavior change." With new tasks facing our departments, Motivational Interviewing (MI) represents a helpful approach to retool our direct practice methods. It is one of the few approaches named directly as a science-based method for probation work by the National Institute of Corrections "Evidence-Based Policy and Practice" initiative (NIC, 2004). MI is a practice included among the eight principles of effective interventions to reduce the risk of recidivism. Within these eight principles, the second principle of evidence-based practice cites:

"2. Enhance Intrinsic Motivation - Research strongly suggests that "motivational interviewing" techniques, rather than persuasion tactics, effectively enhance motivation for initiating and maintaining behavior change." (p.1)

This series has attempted to lend substance to this recommendation by reviewing the many benefits Motivational Interviewing offers to probation staff. The American Probation & Parole Association has responded to the call by offering Motivational Interviewing training as part of their professional development series. All lends encouragement and optimism to community corrections—for the offender, officer and the hopeful communities they impact.



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Endnotes

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