

THE IACFP NEWSLETTER

FORMERLY THE CORRECTIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Vol. 45, No. 3

July, 2013



In This Issue:

- 5 THE ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY OF PRISONS AND JAILS
- 8 MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS: THE ROLE OF INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING IN TREATMENT PLANNING
- 13 TO BE OR NOT TO BE EATEN: THE NEUROARCHITECTURE OF SURVIVAL
- 16 IOWA PAROLE RISK ASSESSMENT: VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION AS PREDICTION PRIORITIES
- 18 WHAT THE PREA STANDARDS MEAN FOR CORRECTIONS MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
- 21 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE READY, SET, GO: MOVING TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT: PROGRAM WITH MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS
- 24 BARRIERS TO PRISON REFORM
- 24 PLEA FOR HELP
- 24 FREE CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS AVAILABLE SOON FOR IACFP MEMBERS
- 26 OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR IACFP PROJECTS AND WE HAVE BEEN HONORED AND RECOGNIZED
- 26 THE 39TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR POLICE AND CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY
- 27 THE IACFP INSTITUTE AND SPALDING UNIVERSITY "SYNTHESIS SERIES ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH"
- 28 ITEMS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST
- 33 BENEFITS OF IACFP MEMBERSHIP
- 34 NEW FROM GUILFORD PRESS

A Publication of the
International Association for
Correctional and Forensic Psychology

MOVING FROM COMPLIANCE TO BEHAVIOR CHANGE: MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING AND THE FIELD OF CORRECTIONS

*Michael D. Clark, MSW, LMSW, Director, Center for Strength-Based Strategies, and the IACFP Secretary
buildmotivation@aol.com*

Probation and parole agencies strive to reach several service goals, yet so much of a court's focus can be compacted into two missions of critical importance. The first mission is to stabilize problem behavior and bring into control any behavior that disrupts or threatens our citizens and communities. Courts have a social mandate to bring into control that which is "out of control." The second mission is to assist positive behavior change and to provide assistance to enable adults under supervision to attain optimum health. Both of these missions operate in tandem for the safety of our communities via the development and increased well-being of its citizens.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is an approach that is gaining notice and popularity across the field of corrections as it helps supervising officers with their mission to assist behavior change. As the name suggests, MI is a method for interviewing clients. However, many who become skilled in its use would argue that it's more than an interviewing method—it informs and influences direct practice efforts as well. Motivational Interviewing first gained prominence in the substance abuse field in the 1980s and found favor in both health care and addiction science due to its ability to enhance client engagement and retention in treatment.

Moving beyond traditional fields of client treatment, disciplines that work with court-mandated clients are also turning to MI.



MICHAEL CLARK

Motivational Interviewing has been embraced by both the U.S. Department of Justice and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) for its

ability to lessen resistance and increase offender motivation (National Institute of Corrections, 2003). Motivational Interviewing gained a foothold in probation departments in the 1990s, and the use of this approach has been expanding ever since. The answer to why community-based and facility personnel would turn to the strategies and skill sets of MI may be found when one reviews several definitions of the approach. Miller and Rollnick (2002) for example, provide a formal definition of MI as a person-centered, directive method of communication for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence. Consider two more definitions, in simpler terms:

- It's a way of using questions and statements strategically to help people think and talk in a positive direction.
- It's an easy way of helping people find their own reasons for change.

Beyond a method for interviewing, MI
(Continued on page 3)

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING *(Continued from page 1)*

offers direction to the field of corrections in order to answer a critical set of questions:

- How do people change?
- How can staff assist offenders to engage in important alterations in their behavior?
- How can staff lend assistance for enduring behavior change— the type of “self-propelled” change that continues long after the person has been dismissed from court jurisdiction?

It is in the answers to these all-important questions that the utility of an MI approach will be found. Many turn to MI because it represents an investigation into the conditions that build cooperation and increase human motivation, and has been successful in teaching court personnel how to best assist those under supervision towards positive behavior change. Why would correction departments want to implement MI? **Motivational Interviewing provides a structured and proven method for assisting behavior change.**

Go back beyond the last 2 decades and you’ll find that criminal justice suffered from a lack of proven methods for reducing recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). Today, it is almost unimaginable that our field ever operated without practice methods being studied and empirically validated through rigorous science. Science-based methods for corrections work were a focus of the NIC’s Evidence-Based Policy and Practice Initiative, which included MI among eight principles of effective interventions that reduce the risks of recidivism (NIC, 2003). The NIC points to confirming research that it’s MI techniques rather than persuasion tactics that motivate individuals both for initiating and maintaining behavior change (NIC, 2003). From NIC’s perspective then, it not only seems reasonable but logical that corrections departments and others in the field, including court services, might benefit from using MI techniques.

Motivational Interviewing can help staff get back into the game of behavior change.

Historically, motivation has been viewed as a more-or-less fixed characteristic of clients. That is, an offender is usually presented with a certain motivational profile, and until he/she was ready to make changes there was not much you could do to influence shifts in behavior. Under this model, the supervising officer becomes an enforcer of the court’s orders, but not necessarily an active participant in the offender’s behavior change. Motivational Interviewing teaches justice staff that motivation is not a fixed trait—something you either have or you don’t. Instead, motivation is more akin to a “state” and a state that can be influenced.

Motivational Interviewing suggests effective tools for

handling resistance and can keep difficult situations from getting worse.

Since motivation has been viewed more like a fixed trait of the defendant, it has been thought that if persons enter probation departments displaying little motivation, then the best strategy is to attempt to break through their denial, rationalization, and excuses:

- “You’ve got a problem.”
- “You have to change.”
- “You’d better change your ways, or else!”

Space prohibits a review of the many studies that have found that a confrontational counseling style limits effectiveness. Miller, Benefield, and Tonnigan (1993), however, found that a directive-confrontational counselor style produced twice the resistance, and only half as many positive client behaviors as did a supportive, client-centered approach. Problems are compounded as a confrontational style not only pushes success away, but can actually make matters worse. Although many probation staff rightly object, “We’re not counselors!—our job is to enforce the orders of the court (maintain facility safety),” this claim only serves to highlight the need for strategies to help staff get back in the game of behavior change.

Motivational Interviewing keeps officers from doing all the work, and makes interactions more change-focused.

Interactions are more change-focused when the officer understands where change comes from. Staff trained in MI can turn away from a confrontational style or logic-based approach as they learn about the process of behavior change. Many in probation believe that what causes change are the services provided to the offender, whether that involves treatment, the threat of punishment, advice, education, or monitoring their activities. These conditions and services represent only part of the picture—and not necessarily the most important part. Research shows that long-term change is more likely to occur for intrinsic reasons (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Often the things that we assume would be motivating to the offender simply aren’t. Thus, motivation is, in part, a process of finding out what things are valued and reinforcing to the individual under supervision.

Change-focused interactions place the responsibility for behavior change on the offender. During MI training, we use an attractive (and accurate) phrase: “When MI is done correctly, it is the offender who voices the arguments for change.” The first step in getting the individual thinking and talking about change is by staff establishing an empathic and collaborative relationship, which includes watching and

(Continued on page 4)

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (Continued from page 3)

listening to find out what the person values and if his or her current behavior is in conflict with these deeply-held values.

Motivational Interviewing calls our attention to this key idea:

It is discrepancy that underlies the perceived importance of change; no discrepancy, no motivation. The discrepancy is generally between present status and a desired goal, between what is happening and how one would want things to be (one's goals).

It is within this discrepancy that the material will be found for amplifying the defendant's own reasons for change. When working with offenders who see no problem with their illegal behavior, it is essential that an officer have the skills to create an "appetite" for change. Creating this appetite for change involves creating ambivalence.

Motivational Interviewing will change who does the talking.

Motivational Interviewing techniques focus on strategically steering a conversation in a particular direction—yet steering in itself is worthless without the ability to move the conversation forward. Consider how probation officers often work much harder than their probationers. As part of a qualitative research project, Clark (2005) videotaped actual office appointments between probationers and their assigned supervising officers. The finding was that, in office visits averaging 15 minutes in length, officers "out-talk" their probationers by a large margin. For instance, in one session, 2,768 words were spoken between officer and offender. The breakdown? The officer spoke a hefty 2,087 words out of this total while the probationer spoke only 681 words. Although listening by itself is no guarantee of behavior change, using strategies to get the person talking is a prerequisite to being an effective motivational interviewer.

In interactions like this, officers are literally talking themselves out of effectiveness. The problem is not so much that the officer is doing all the talking, but rather that the offender is not. It stands to reason that the more the officer is talking, the less opportunity there is for the person who is under supervision to talk and think about change. Compliance can occur without the officer listening and the offender feeling understood—the same cannot be said if one wants to induce behavior change.

Postscript

Motivational Interviewing can enable courts and facilities to help clients build commitment and reach a decision to change. Rather than remaining "stuck" in the problem, court

staff using Motivational Interviewing techniques can move those we work with toward healthier outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2003). *The psychology of criminal conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Company.
- Clark, M.D. (2005). *Qualitative review of probation officer and offender dialogues: Transcript word counts for "talk-time" ratios*. Unpublished study. Center for Strength-Based Strategies.
- Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R.M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Miller, W.R., Benefield, R. G., & Tonnigan, J. S. (1993). Enhancing motivation for change in problem drinking: A controlled comparison of two therapist styles. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61, 455-461.
- Miller, W.R., & Rollnick, S. (2002). *Motivational interviewing: Preparing people for change*. New York: Guilford Press.
- National Institute of Corrections. (2003). *Implementing evidence-based practice in community corrections: The principles of effective intervention*. Washington, DC: Author.

Michael D. Clark, MSW, has provided train-the-trainer initiatives for Motivational Interviewing to departments of corrections in various states across the United States and has presented this topic as an invited guest lecturer to the 12th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice when it last convened in Salvador, Brazil. Go to: buildmotivation.com for more information on MI.

