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Motivational Interviewing for Deradicalization: Increasing the Readiness to Change

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Abstract
This article focuses on direct practice for deradicalization programming. Considering the progression of research to practice, there is a lack of recommendations from existing deradicalization research to inform those engaged in actual service delivery with extremists. Those engaged in one-to-one efforts or group modalities need strategies and techniques to better structure and standardize their efforts. This article suggests motivational interviewing (MI) as one evidence-based practice and well-researched approach that could be applied for countering violent extremism (CVE) work. Motivational interviewing is an approach that is particularly useful when the goal is observable behavior change. It is favored for those who are ambivalent to change as well those who are more resistant, angry or reluctant to change. This article will describe how motivational interviewing appears to be a natural fit for deradicalization and disengagement programs (DDPs) by reviewing eight benefits to this approach. The helpfulness of motivational interviewing is realized as many DDP staff are not trained in methods to increase motivation nor do they have a working knowledge of the process of human behavior change. A point of confluence is made that regardless of the challenging population one works with, whether they are offenders from the criminology field or radicalized terrorists in the deradicalization field, the mechanics that propel behavior change remain the same.

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Introduction

The field of countering violent extremism (CVE) has placed great effort into developing a 'science of entry.' Across the last decade, a balance has emerged via deradicalization (Derad)

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www.buildmotivation.com. This author would like to express his appreciation for the Islamic Imams who engage in Derad efforts—forever striving to sow the seeds of peace.

research as a host of publications have turned to the examination of what might influence a radicalized person to exit terrorism. Examining the topic of withdrawing brings hope to those engaged in direct practice—hope that recommendations for strategies and techniques will eventually trickle-down to assist one-to-one efforts.

This article takes a next-step to ensure the progression of "research to practice" so that more information can be added to shape a "science of exiting." To consider the triune of "research, policy and practice," the goal of this article is to offer suggestions for a well-researched method to assist direct practice. John Horgan notes the field of deradicalization and disengagement programing suffers from a lack of practice techniques for those working the front lines (personal communication, May 29, 2019). Whether it is prison-based or community-based, at some point, a staff person will sit down across from a terrorist and begin talking. This commentary speaks to those working in this direct capacity, delivering services via individual or group modalities. It is past time to suggest operational "how to's" and outline methods and techniques for line staff engaged in actual service delivery

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is one evidence-based approach that appears to be a natural fit for assisting any deradicalization and disengagement program (DDP). MI is not unknown to the CVE field as there have been earlier references to MI, with brief details of application and recommendations for its use (Haugstvedt, 2019; Marsden, 2017; Williams, 2017; RAN, 2017). This article becomes a next step by providing more thorough information about this approach along with reviewing several benefits that could be realized from implementation of MI across DDPs.

What is Motivational Interviewing?

There has been considerable interest shown in motivational interviewing (MI), since William R. Miller initially presented it as an alternative to working with problem drinkers—particularly those individuals who may have been perceived as being resistant or in denial (Miller, 1983). Miller was later joined by Stephen Rollnick, a physician who had been

developing similar methods in health care, and together they advanced MI a way of communicating with people to help them find their own reasons for change (Miller & Rollnick, 1991; 2002; 2013).

Even though it started in the field of addictions, MI has since widened its reach, becoming a favored approach for use with populations in a variety of settings (Burke, Arkowitz, & Dunn, 2002), including criminal justice agencies (Birgden, 2004; McMurran, 2002; Farrall, 2002), probation and parole (Clark, 2005; Clark, 2006; Walters, Clark, Gingerich, & Meltzer, 2007), reentry (Craig, 2012; Stinson & Clark, 2017) and corrections/prisons (Clark, 2014; Stinson & Clark, 2017; Forsberg, et. al., 2011; Antiss, Polaschek & Wilson, 2011). The tremendous growth of this approach in criminology is due, in part, to a drive to move beyond a sole focus on compliance and supervision to engage in the "business of behavior change" (Clark, et al 2006).

MI is not a specialty skill reserved only for professional counselors. It is quite general and fundamental to how you listen deeply and communicate with a guiding style. In criminology, it is used by probation and parole officers as well as prison staff working inside facilities. Not to be confused with professional counselors or other professional disciplines who work in an adjunct fashion to assist courts or governmental settings, but actual probation and prison staff in direct practice with offenders in their everyday work.

For DDP application, this begs a question: Why would staff that generally assume surveillance and control tasks turn to MI and adopt this client-centered style of practice? One reason may be that MI is considered particularly useful when the goal is observable behavior change as well as when the person is more resistant, angry or reluctant to change. MI was developed for situations when program goals and participant goals do not match. Advice giving, confrontation and coercion are avoided in favor of engagement, relationship building and amplifying the extremists own reasons for change.

The method of MI involves four processes; engagement (are we shoulder to shoulder?); focusing (if we are in alliance, then where are we headed?); evoking (if we know our destination, why would you want to go there?); and planning (how do we get there?).

These four processes and attendant techniques assist the movement through the sequence of behavior change. These techniques are all grounded in egalitarian principles, conveyed as the "Spirit of MI." These principles form the acronym P.A.C.E. – Partnership, Acceptance, Compassion and Evocation (Miller & Rollnick, 2013) which best underscores an open mindset (and heartset) that must run in tandem to the skillset—all which combine to empower this evidence-based practice.

Research has found that when staff use MI-consistent skills, people are more likely to respond with change talk. (Moyers & Martin, 2006; Moyers et al., 2007, Moyers et al., 2009). Change talk statements can either favor change ("I need to do something") or disfavors their status quo ("I can't stand this anymore"). MI can help DDP staff to both recognize and elicit change talk from those they work with. Understanding this type of talk is important because research finds that voicing change talk has been found to increase the probability of change, especially when combined with talk that expresses a commitment to change (Amrhein et al., 2003; Moyers et al., 2007, Moyers et al., 2009). A person who talks about the benefits of change is more likely to make that change, whereas a person who argues and defends the status quo is more likely to continue his or her problematic beliefs and behavior (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Motivational interviewing helps people connect the need for change to something they care about, which helps internalize the change process. What makes MI truly unique from other client-centered approaches is found in the difference between evoking and installing; MI seeks to evoke intrinsic reasons for change rather than install the reasons they should change, which often takes the form of persuading the person to "see it our way." Heavily directive or attacking styles give way to a guiding style of communication. It moves away from confrontation and toward collaboration, wherein a provider and program participant are each responsible for parts of the change process. Since all behavior change is essentially self-change, the program participant is brought front and center.

When motivational interviewing is done skillfully, it is the offender who voices the arguments for change. How can that be? How do you do this? This involves a "two-step"

process—with the first step focused on establishing an empathic and collaborative relationship. Building this type of relationship does not mean you indulge or condone, it simply means you treat them as a whole person who is worthy of respect. MI represents a dramatic departure from conventional work. The challenge is to look within to decide whether or not terrorist behavior negates a person's humanity. To those embracing MI, it does not. Yet this is a very personal decision –and one that needs to be made by all who might use this approach. You cannot change what already has been. You can only work to change what could be.

The second step is to listen for or evoke the person's values, and to explore how their current behavior fits within the context of these deeply-held values. Discrepancy exists when there is a gap, or disconnect, between values and actions. MI draws attention to the idea that discrepancy underlies the perceived importance of change. No discrepancy means no motivation. Discrepancy amplifies the extremist's own reasons for change and MI teaches techniques for creating and amplifying discrepancy. Highlighting this discrepancy creates an "appetite for change." Here, motivational interviewing places staff in the position of guiding an extremist toward change, rather than responsible for forcing or taking responsibility for the process.

There is ample availability of training in Motivational Interviewing (MI), with sufficient access in most regions where Derad programs operate. The main authorities for this approach can be found within the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT), which is an international organization established in 1997 as a professional community of practitioners and trainers (see Tobutt, 2010). The MINT has grown to over 1,500 members and spread across 52 different countries. Training usually relies on a sequence of workshops followed by coaching and feedback. An initial two days of introductory content, followed by a return to work for on-the-job application, followed by two more days of advanced content. From here, new learning requires coaching and feedback. Staff build skills with greater speed and competency under the helpful eye of a coach who offers feedback and correction (Stinson

& Clark, 2017). Many programs who operate at great distances from urban centers have incorporated web-based training and telephone coaching options.

Benefits of Motivational Interviewing (MI) for Deradicalization programs

There are several advantages that MI extends to Deradicalization programming. As an experienced MI practitioner and trainer, this author moves to suggest several benefits of this Motivational Interviewing approach for the deradicalization field. A list of eight such benefits include:

1. MI can align a DDP with an evidence-based practice.
2. MI moves beyond compliance to focus on behavior change.
3. MI prepares the individual for change.
4. MI suggests effective ways of handling resistance and can keep situations from getting worse.
5. MI has been used effectively by many professional disciplines and in many different settings.
6. MI crosses cultures well.
7. MI is learnable.
8. MI improves the outcome of other treatments.

Benefit #1: MI can align a DDP with an evidence-based practice.

With over 1,200 controlled clinical trials, across many different fields, MI has been designated as an evidence-based practice (SAMHSA-NREPP, 2008). An empirical study of motivational interviewing suggests that certain types of brief counseling interactions are as beneficial as more lengthy interventions, and that certain kinds of provider styles more effectively elicit change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). In MI, arguing and coercing for change is avoided in favor of an emphasis on listening and drawing out motivations and desires that are

already within the person. Using a more collaborative style suggested by MI, the staff person elicits the person's ideas about change so they can identify and voice their intrinsic reasons for change (Stinson & Clark, 2017).

These elements, that are empirically supported and align with best practices for multiple problem areas, make them particularly relevant for those who work with extremists. Derad research has already discussed the linkage of evidence-based practices that are known and used in criminology, to application within the terrorism field (LaFree & Miller, 2008; Mullins, 2010; Altier et al., 2014; Koehler, 2017). It is important to stay mindful that those seeking direct practice tools generally do not fight turf battles. Most administrators of direct service programs look for methods and techniques that can be (a) accessed via available training, (b) learned over time to build both competency and proficiency of skills, (c) applied by their staff in everyday work, and (d) used to improve program outcomes. For direct practice, ease of application and practicality trump professional domains and causal theories. The "proof" or relevance for the use of any direct practice methodology is the extent to which it can help staff influence positive behavior change. Security and compliance are important first steps, but they stop-short if they serve as a final goal. The focus of MI is enduring behavior change. Should any direct practice approach used within a DDP not follow suit?

Benefit #2: MI moves beyond compliance and focuses on behavior change.

To secure and disarm, to ensure initial compliance and stabilization, is critically important for Derad processing—but it is not enough. The initial goal of stabilization and compliance must eventually give way to behavior change. With MI, direct practice work can begin the process of behavior change with extremists. While it is true that you can never "make" anyone change, what you can do is help people increase their readiness to change. You can use methods and techniques that improve the probability or likelihood that change will occur.

Historically, motivation has been viewed as a more-or-less fixed characteristic. That is, a person presents with a certain motivational "profile," and until that individual is ready for

change, there is little that you can do to influence his or her choices and behaviors. All too often, this notion that motivation is a "fixed characteristic" seems far too prevalent in Derad research. Terms such as "windows" (Altier, et al., 2014, p.651), "self-initiated openness" (Dechesne, 2011, p.289), or "cognitive openings" (Rabasa, et al., 2010, p. 118) or situations responsible for "crystallizing discontent" (Bubolz & Simi, 2015, p.1598) are more-or-less consigned to something that occurs primarily within the domain of the extremist—but outside the locus of staff. More specifically, the strengthening or activation of these variables that may affect change within potential exiters are rarely attributed to staff efforts.

Here is where Derad publications appear to marginalize direct practice staff, leaving them disempowered. So many characterizations of an extremist's path to change will chart epiphanies or conditions that may bring the extremist to a decision juncture – yet they seem to be described in a context that falls outside of the staff person's influence. MI does not ask DDP staff to passively watch for these "cognitive openings" but rather to actively evoke and activate them. Training in Motivational Interviewing can turn staff from becoming aware and vigilant of possible "windows," to providing a skill base that can actively influence their opening.

This shift in thinking can put DDP staff in a position to be more than "watching eyes" or gatekeepers. It can help positioned them to better understand the sequence of human behavior change and how they can assist this process There is an adage in the MI field, "You may not be responsible for the client's starting point, but you do have considerable influence over what happens next." (Stinson & Clark, 2017, p. 18). A DDP staff person need not feel marginalized or distanced from any program participant's efforts to change. A remedy is found in how Motivational Interviewing suggests there is a fair amount one can do to influence a participant's readiness to change. It would seem that the Derad field has lacked mechanisms through which staff can involve themselves in this process. Motivational interviewing could prove to reposition staff to be an accelerant in the exiter's process of behavior change.

Benefit #3: MI prepares the individual for change.

There is a rather tongue-in-cheek statement often made within the MI training community, "Change is difficult. You first." Change is often difficult and we are short-sighted if we do not consider that people need to prepare for it. This is as true for the toughest terrorists as it is for the rest of us. There certainly are changes that occur by epiphanies or can be located within exact moments in time (Miller, 2004), yet the far largest experience of change occurs as a sequential process. Consider this sequence of change:

Importance → Confidence → Readiness

So many staff are not taught the basics of human motivation nor the sequence of behavior change. As a result, staff can bypass the work for "importance" for change and jump ahead to "readiness." With little preparation to change, many will move right to problem solving, trying to coerce positive talk and planning. All of this ignores or bypasses the idea of "first things first." MI cautions staff that "getting right to it" and pressing someone generally lengthens the change process. This is known as the "pressure paradox" (Zuckoff & Gorscak, 2015, p.37) a term that describes the phenomena of psychological reactance (Brehm & Brehm, 1981), a well-documented problem in Derad programming (Koehler, 2017) where coercive pushing can actually strengthen the problem. Knowing that the use of pressure often backfires, MI avoids this misstep by training basic listening skills and engagement strategies to help avoid reactance.

Increasing a terrorist's sense of importance starts with the awareness that most people are ambivalent about change. Their ambivalence takes many binary forms: Can vs. can not, should vs. shouldn't, and want to vs. do not want to. Life balances precariously on a decisional seesaw, and it is a common human experience. In fact, this teetering is so ordinary that it is considered a natural part of the change process (DiClemente, 2003; Engle & Arkowitz, 2006). These are the situations for which MI was originally developed – when the person is ambivalent about change. Ambivalence occurs when the DDP participant's beliefs

simultaneously support and counter the need for change. There are two or more sides to the argument, which may be felt by the person as an internal tug-of-war. It is not that they have no importance, it is more that they are stuck. A key training maxim posits that ambivalence is generally not resolved by pressure, advice or reasoning. MI helps DDP staff understand that (a) most of their program participants are already ambivalent about their behavior when they come in the door, and (b) that advice or reasoning is a very poor method to resolve this ambivalence. With Motivational Interviewing, you highlight the person's own motivations and facilitate decision-making about change.

Of course, not everyone is ambivalent. Some need to change (our view) but they see no reason for it, or believe it will not benefit them to change at the present time (their view). Their behaviors have caused harm to themselves or others, but they are committed to maintaining the status quo. The good news for Derad work is such persons are rare. The greatest majority have both sides within them (change – do not change), yet they do not feel safe enough to open up and talk about the pro-change side. They can appear to have little interest in change because the person expects to be berated or coerced and closes up. Many have had a poor history of interacting with officials or authority figures, which have often left them criticized, penalized (or worse). Trust has not been established. It is also possible that ambivalence is present but the staff person hasn't asked enough open-ended questions and simply listened closely enough to hear both sides. Here's where the "push" and "pull" factors, commonly cited in Derad research come into play (Koehler, 2017; Altier, Thoroughgood and Horgan, 2014). MI understands these same forces and calls them "forms of ambivalence" using the different terms of "approach" and "avoidance" factors to describe these same prompts (Stinson & Clark, 2017, pg. 135).

Many may lament that the person just is not motivated. They may be tempted to think that some only live for terror, that their aspirations are causes taken to the extreme, or even that their purpose in life is placing their group atop a new social hierarchy through violence. While it is easy to understand the pessimism, such thinking gets us nowhere. Lacking any belief that the person holds contrasting positive values runs counter to the spirit of

motivational interviewing. To focus on this healthy side—and evoke talk about it—is helped by adopting a Strengths Perspective (Clark, 2009) that is more about capacity than deficit. The far largest majority of extremists have a healthy side to evoke. Focusing on the smallest percentage of outliers, thought to have no restorative values, is simply a form of cynical entrenchment. One of the most powerful human motivators is the power of the committed heart. In winning the hearts and minds of extremists, MI calls all to consider that a commitment of heart involves more than just the extremist; it also involves the values, beliefs and desires of staff.

Benefit #4: MI suggests effective ways of handling resistance and can keep situations from getting worse.

MI invites new trainees to consider the difference between reluctance and resistance. For Derad programs that actively reach out to potential defectors, it can be an all-to-common experience to find extremists who are reluctant to change. Part of MI's popularity is that it offers strategies and techniques to help staff navigate this reluctance—while at the same time to avoid turning reluctance into resistance. Resistance generally comes from perceived opposition or the staff pushing for a change agenda before the person is ready.

MI also cautions against establishing an attitude of contingent or discretionary engagement. This type of engagement is characterized by staff developing a partnership with the agreeable people who follow the rules, but you suspend the partnership for persons who break the rules, or who prove difficult to work with. Assuming this position detaches you from the change process and puts you in the position of an observer, passively reacting to what the client does. Instead, partnership is an active process, with important roles for both persons involved in the relationship. MI's notion of "resistance" is simply a signal that we are not in sync or paced correctly with the participant. We "roll with resistance" (Miller & Rollnick, 2002) rather than confront it directly, as MI has many resistance-lowering techniques to regain engagement and get the relationship back on track.

Some staff may bristle at this idea. They've been taught to break through the person's denial, rationalization, or excuses by being direct and confrontational: "You've got a problem." "You have to change." "You'd better change or else!" However, many studies find that this confrontational style limits effectiveness (e.g., Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999; Miller & Rollnick, 2003). One early study of counseling style in alcohol treatment found that a directive-confrontational style produced twice the resistance and only half as many "positive" client behaviors as did a supportive, client-centered approach (Miller, Benefield, & Tonigan, 1993). The more the staff person confronted the problem behavior, the more the clients drank at twelve-month follow up. Thus, not only is a confrontational style less effective, but it can actually make matters worse.

Instead of using a confrontational approach, another pitfall awaits as some will turn to a logical approach. The hallmark of a logical approach is to employ advice or reasoning: "Why don't you just…?" "Do you know what your participation in this armed group is doing to you?" "Here's how you should go about leaving this armed conflict…" However, while not as directly challenging to the person's beliefs or behaviors as a confrontational approach does, approaching the offender with logic and reasoning can be equally problematic. Just as with confrontational approaches, a logical or advice-giving stance can come across as patronizing, authoritarian, or forceful. You do not want to create a situation where the potential exiter only defends the "do not change" side of the equation. Instead, you want to create a climate in which you and the participant can discuss both sides of their ambivalence with an eye to highlighting change talk or using evocation techniques if little change talk is offered. The MI approach finds that a more supportive and client-centered style is often the key to enhancing motivation.

For clarity, MI understands the need for secure detention and recognizes the use of jail or prisons as program settings. Security is a critical necessity and the need to stabilize those who are engaged in terror is a foregone conclusion for most. What MI conveys to the Derad field is that there is simply a limit to coercion. Disrespectful treatment is not a sanction, it is simply disrespect. Research is clear that these approaches, embraced by persons who favor

confrontation or pressured compliance, fail to produce lasting and meaningful change (Walters, et. al., 2007). MI's rise in criminology has been due (in part) to its dramatic departure from the "muscle approach" that many courts and offender program staff found ineffective (Stinson & Clark, 2017, p. 68).

Benefit #5: MI has been used effectively by many professional disciplines and in many different settings.

Rabassa, et. al., (2010) notes, "When they appear to be successful, deradicalization programs have been comprehensive efforts…" (p. 192). Certainly, this scope of programming involves professional disciplines that are called upon to assist a DDP. Daniel Koheler (2017) calls attention to a "core set of tools used in practically every Deradicalization progam" (p. 7). Here, motivational interviewing is not untried or experimental but has been applied to all of the disciplines listed by Koehler. MI applications to these professional fields include;

- family programs (Braver, et al., 2016; O'Kane et al., 2019),
- substance abuse counseling (Chermack et al., 2019; Carroll et al., 2006; Carroll, et al., 2001),
- social workers and mentors (Pheiffer, et. al., 2018; Hohman (2012); Naar-King & Outlaw, 2009),
- vocational training, (Britt, Sawatzky & Swibaker, 2018; Scott et al., 2018),
- psychology counseling, (Arkowitz, et al., 2015; Westra, 2015),
- educational methods (Rollnick et al., 2016; Sayegh, et al., 2017) and
- theological interventions (Miller, 1999).

Important to note that with over 800 clinical trials showing beneficial effect, MI has not only been applied to these various disciplines, but has a robust research record as well (Miller, 2019).

Beyond assisting a range of professional disciplines, MI's application suits both genders (Wandera et al., 2016; Peltier, et al., 2018; Rasouli, 2017), has been applied to both

adults (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; Clark, 2005) as well as adolescents-young adults (Rongkavilit et al., 2013; Naar-King & Suarez, 2011) and has been used individually and well as in a group modality (Wagner & Ingersoll, 2013; Valsquez, et al., 2006). The physical setting is also important for Derad programming. MI has been used in community-based programming with offenders (Stinson & Clark, 2017; Clark, 2006) and MI has been used within prisons (Forsberg, et al., 2011; Antiss, et al., 2011) and jails (Staton, et al., 2018; Pentergast, et al., 2017; Van Dorn, et al., 2017). It is significant to call attention to MI's use within prisons and jails, as a sizable portion of Derad programming occurs in secure settings.

One context to examine specifically is the application of MI to theological interventions. Regarding the various professional disciplines called on to assist Derad, Daniel Koehler (2017) points out, "Theological and ideological debates or dialogue is the only tool characteristic of Deradicalization programs, compared to other rehabilitative initiatives." (p. 226). Examining the application of MI to theological interventions is important as religious mediation is a feature that appears unique to deradicalization. Two points need to be addressed; first, MI has a history with theological interventions; MI has been applied not only to addressing spirituality and religion in human services counseling (Giordanao & Cahswell, 2014; Clarke, et.al., 2013) but to counseling extended by theological leaders specifically (Martin & Sibn, 2009). The second point is to call attention to initial MI training that has been delivered to Christian pastors (Clark, 2002) as well as Islamic Imams, with the latter specifically intended to be applied to their deradicalization efforts.

The reasoning to utilize motivational interviewing remains consistent when religious leaders are the focus of Derad efforts. The foundational "spirit of MI" syncs well with religious tenets, helping the religious interventionist to "walk the walk" and build engagement before they move to increase a person's readiness to change. Having more techniques at one's disposal can enable religious scholars and clergy to move beyond trying to use persuasive arguments to "convince them" (Rabasa, 2010), an issue that Braddock (2014) cautions can strengthen the very behavior one hopes to extinguish with extremists.

There is a familiar MI question that could also be posed to programs that utilize religious leaders and ideological debates, "Do you want to be right or do you want to be successful?" Simply stated, if using persuasive arguments and debates are successful, then use them. When they do not work, it is helpful to have MI to turn to. Religious leaders may find it useful to have staff use MI as a prelude with those who would be included in audiences for ideological dialogues or religious debates. MI has techniques to gain permission to "give advice"—all to increase the odds that shared advice or information will be heard and accepted. Receptivity to religious doctrine is heightened if the extremist has active acceptance and willing participation. Preparing the soil before dropping the seed is not a new idea.

Benefit #6: MI crosses cultures well.

MI is now being taught and practiced in over 54 languages. Miller (2017) states that in 2017 alone, new controlled trials of MI were published from Africa (Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria , South Africa, Uganda), Asia (Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Turkey), Central and South America (Brazil, Chile, Mexico), Europe (Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K.), Oceania (Australia, New Zealand), and North America (Canada, U.S., as well as three Native American sovereign nations: Cherokee, Chicksaw, and Zuni).

While many psychological treatments to not cross cultures well—motivational interviewing does—as evidenced by 11controlled clinical trials examining the cross-cultural applications of MI (Miller, 2019). With respect to MI, it seems that racial and ethnic minorities may benefit just as much, if not more, when compared with the ethnic majorities (Oh & Lee, 2016). A finding from one meta-analysis is significant. Hettema, Steele & Miller (2005) published a meta-analysis of 72 studies, 37 of which looked at racial/ethnic composition. These researchers found that effects of MI were significantly larger for minority samples. When MI was used with people from minority backgrounds, the effect size was doubled across clinical trials. So why does MI work better cross-culturally – especially when one would expect "no difference" between differing ethnic or cultural groups? William

Miller, co-originator of this approach, offered a narrative that is thought-provoking if one were to consider the application to DDPs:

> MI seems to be particularly useful with people who are least respected. It is for people who are the most marginalized and who are the most despised and rejected members of our society. If you're a minority member, you may not be familiar with being treated respectfully. (Miller, 2018)

Beyond the application for potential exiters, it is also important to note that MI is effective at crossing cultures for training staff. A finding from a study on cross-cultural training found normative rates of improvement in adherence to MI style and practices and the investigators concluded that "MI can be effectively trained and delivered with ethnic minority populations" (Miller et. al., 2008, p. 13).

Benefit #7: MI is Learnable.

Miller, Moyers & Rollnick (2013) note the ability to learn MI is not contingent on years of experience or level of professional education. Fidelity to MI practice predicts better outcomes and fidelity of MI practice can improve with training, particularly with individual feedback and coaching. A note of caution is added that staff often overestimate their skill level (Hohman & Matulich, 2010) believing themselves to be more proficient than they are. DDP administers can be reassured that reliable and valid tools have been developed to measure the quality of MI being delivered (Madson & Campbell, 2006).

An important new study by Koehler and Fiebig (2019) sampled current training offered across the Derad field with an investigative eye into how deeply the training content is rooted in evidence-based research. Several training programs were found to be teaching elements of motivational interviewing (p. 55). It is important to note that the issue of training MI for Derad work has moved beyond presence (no/yes) to that of degree (less/more)—and with great hope will soon encompass scope (some / many) as more DDPs embrace this evidence-based practice.

Benefit #8: MI improves the outcomes of other treatments.

The suggestion to consider MI for Derad programming does not imply that MI would replace any existing interventions and become the sole approach in a DDP. One would import MI as a standardized base for direct services but not replace current programming. Miller and Rollnick (2013) note MI is not a comprehensive treatment, but was designed to address a particular task: to resolve ambivalence in the direction of change (p.402).

As diverse and complex as Derad programming can be, it is important to take notice of the finding that MI is complementary to other intervention methods. This is evidenced by the conclusion that when MI is added to other evidence-based practices (EBP), both become more effective—and the effect size is sustained over a longer period of time (Miller, 2018). The evidence-based practice becomes more effective because people are more responsive to participate and complete what is intended by the EBP treatment. And similarly, when combined, MI becomes more effective because this EBP increases both client engagement and retention in treatment (Carroll et al.. 2006; Secades-Villa, 2004)—all of which is added to the intervention in use. MI is not a prelude to treatment but rather it forms a "base" approach (a "way of being") to be used throughout programming with participants.

The Issue Regarding Fit - Conclusion

This article finishes with a key question: Is Motivational Interviewing a good fit for DDPs? In talks this author has conducted with those knowledgeable of counter-terrorism work, a growing number of administrators and practitioners credit MI as being that fit. Similarly, Marsden (2017) notes, "Motivational Interviewing is increasingly being recognised as relevant for those involved in extremism" (p. 94).

Despite a growing interest in MI, the suggestion to employ motivational interviewing across the Derad field may seem daunting by some and impossible by others. Some might point out there is no 'silver bullet' to deradicalization work and a similar reply is that MI is no cure-all. DDP staff may not always succeed when using MI, but at least they will keep the

extremist focused on their behaviors and life choices rather than muddling through participants defending the problem behavior or arguing with staff.

Those needing ample assurance will point out that no specific outcome research has been done on the use of MI with extremists. This author acknowledges this current research vacuum for extremists as a specific population. Yet, with the extensive research conducted with similar (but not same) challenging populations, does MI seem to be such a gamble? One point of confluence is offered: "No matter what population you work with, the mechanisms that propel behavior change remain the same. This is the reason that motivational interviewing has such broad applicability to such seemingly different groups." (Stinson & Clark. 2017, p. 241).

Detractors might also call attention that tough, attacking styles are accepted in some DDPs. The counter-point to this issue is straight-forward; progress and change does not have "sides." Direct confrontation has little relationship with actual behavior change and in most instances; it damages the relationship and leaves you less able to assist with behavior change. It is interesting that being tough-on-terrorism can leave one being "spoiled for change," which for all its bluster is actually a weaker position. The MI alternative of negotiating ambivalence, evoking change talk and increasing the readiness to change—the directional aspect of MI—is neither "soft" nor easy, as it requires more skills, patience and strength from the staff person. There are over 1,000 research studies demonstrating that positive relationships are one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of outcome across approaches (Orlinsky, Ronnestad & Willutzki, 2004). Holding fast to the idea that work with terrorists is any different is simply being resistant to change oneself.

It was no accident that MI arose in the field of criminology after several decades of muscle and punishment that only made things worse. This left offender service programs overwhelmed by roadblocks that many now realize were self-imposed (Bogue et al., 2004; McMurran, 2002). No accident either that MI flourished within the addiction field at a time when harsh, confrontational—even even abusive treatment practices—were acceptable if not lauded (White & Miller, 2007).

MI seems to take hold in systems that have relied too heavily on the killer D's of failed authority; directing, demanding and domination. Even in scenarios where capture and disarmament occur and intelligence gathering is necessary, motivational interviewing improved cooperation and interview yields during interrogation of terrorists (Alison, et al., 2013). For cynics to say that MI cannot work for deradicalization is to render the field "terminally unique."

Regarding programs and services to deradicalize, Mullins (2010) states, "…the 'bottom line' or ultimate aim is to bring about behavioral change…" (p. 163). Motivational Interviewing, and its abilities to increase the readiness to change, could help realize this defining goal.

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