



Motivational Interviewing

What is Motivational Interviewing?

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a collaborative conversation to strengthen a person’s own motivation for and commitment to change. It is a practical technique for use in health care that can help people through the stages of change.

Principles of Motivational Interviewing

The five general principles of MI are:

- 1 **Express empathy through reflective listening** – This encourages a nonjudgmental, collaborative relationship.
- 2 **Develop discrepancy between patients' goals or values and their current behavior** – A discrepancy between present behavior and important goals motivates change.
- 3 **Avoid argument and direct confrontation** – Arguments are counterproductive.
- 4 **Roll with resistance** – Adjust to client resistance rather than opposing it directly.
- 5 **Support self-efficacy and optimism** – Belief in the possibility of change is an important motivator.

Motivational interviewing techniques may be helpful for:

- Vaccine hesitancy
- Substance abuse
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Asthma
- Other health care topics

Motivational Interviewing Resources

[Vital Talk – Communication Skills for the COVID Vaccine](#): This is a user-friendly tool based off a Kaiser Family Foundation December 2020 study that reveals the most common reasons for people not wanting to get the COVID vaccine. It also crosswalks reasons with MI responses health care practitioners can use.

[Motivational Interviewing: A Powerful Tool to Address Vaccine Hesitancy](#): This is a quick journal article that breaks down different components of MI for vaccine hesitancy (not COVID-specific). The article contains typical health care practitioner responses for vaccine hesitancy and then restates the conversations with MI techniques.

[Motivational Interviewing as a Counseling Style](#): This chapter from Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, “Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Abuse Treatment,” gives detail on the different principles of MI and how to practice it. This also dives into expressing empathy for different ethnic and cultural differences, including American Indian/Alaska Native populations.

[University of Massachusetts – Motivational Interviewing](#): This article provides an MI overview, its approach, the spirit of MI, its principles and skills and strategies.

[Encouraging Motivation to Change. Am I Doing this Right?](#): This tool is a PDF file that can be printed and offered as a handout to build self-awareness.

[UConn Health – Supplemental Module A. Motivational Interviewing](#): This is a free training with a brief overview of MI. The training includes a video, materials and handouts.