Motivational Interviewing for Employment Issues

Dr. Tina Christine Chasek
Associate Professor
Counseling and School Psychology
University of Nebraska at Kearney
Motivational Interviewing and Employment: What’s the FIT?

• Unemployment in general correlates with illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, lack of social connection and many other adverse outcomes (Hergenrather, et al, 2015)

• People with serious mental illness (SMI) are unemployment at very high rates, exceeding 90% in some states (NAMI, 2014)

• People with SMI die of treatment conditions 25 years younger than the general population (WHO, 2013)

• Employment can be thought of as a health intervention, as employment increases healthcare costs decrease (Antonisse & Garfield, 2018)
Vulnerable Jobseekers

• An emerging practice in the workforce development field is the use of Motivational Interviewing (MI) to help vulnerable jobseekers with barriers to employment overcome the ambivalence, self-doubts and hesitations holding them back from actively committing to seeking a job (Lloyd, Tse, Waghorn, Hennessy, 2013).

• Research has suggested that motivational interviewing can be used to improve vocational outcomes among people living with serious mental health conditions (Hampson, Hicks, & Watts, 2015).
Supported Employment (SE)

• Supported Employment is an approach to vocational rehabilitation for people with SMI that emphasizes helping them obtain competitive work in the community and providing the supports necessary to ensure their success. (SAMHSA, 2009)
  • The philosophy behind SE is that every person with a SMI is capable of working competitively in the community if the right kind of job and work environment can be found.

• 60% of consumers can be successful at working when using supported employment services (Bond, 2004)
Supported Employment Challenges

• SE de-emphasizes prevocational assessment and training and puts a premium on a rapid job search and attainment

• Practice Principles pose some challenges for those working with consumers
  • Eligibility is based on consumer choice
  • Job search starts soon after consumers express interest in working
  • Consumer preferences are important
    (SAMHSA, 2009)
Motivational Interviewing (MI)

• **Motivational interviewing** is a psychotherapeutic approach that attempts to move an individual away from a state of indecision or uncertainty and towards finding motivation to making positive decisions and accomplishing established goals.

• **MI** is also seen an intervention technique involving enhancing a person’s motivation to change based on a set of guiding principles.

• MI is used for many different things where ambivalence is present.

  (CSAT, 1999)
Motivational Interviewing and Employment for Vulnerable Jobseekers

- Motivational Interviewing is an intervention that can address some of the challenges of employment for vulnerable jobseekers, namely consumers ambivalence about working.
- MI can help consumers who are uncertain or not interested in working by increasing their internal motivation.
- Because the job search starts soon after consumers express interest in working, motivational interview can help the consumer come to a decision to work.
- Consumer preferences are important in supported employment and employment services for vulnerable jobseekers just as they are in motivational interviewing.
  (Larson, Boyle, & Kuwabara, 2007)
Motivational Interviewing Concepts

• Foundational Concepts for Change
  • Ambivalence about change is normal; it is also a motivational obstacle.
  • Ambivalence can be resolved by working with the person’s intrinsic motivations and values.
  • The alliance between you and the consumer is a collaborative partnership in which each bring important expertise.
  • An empathic, supportive, yet directive style provides conditions under which change occur.
    (CSAT, 1999)
Motivational Interviewing Concepts

• Transtheoretical Model of Change
  Prochaska & DiClemente, 1998

  ◦ Understanding readiness to change provides important considerations for intervention
  ◦ Consumers may need different interventions depending on where they are in the change cycle
Pre-Contemplation

- Consumer is unaware, unable, or unwilling to change.
- Consumer is likely to be wary
  - Don’t rub consumer the “wrong way”
  - Establish rapport
  - Show empathy
  - Raise doubts about problem behavior
  - Provide info on risks – pros & cons

- Goal is to increase awareness of the need to change.
Knowledge Check - Pre-Contemplation

• True or False
• In the Pre-Contemplation stage of change consumers are not interested in working and so motivational interviewing will not work.
Knowledge Check-Answer

• **FALSE!**
  • The Pre-Contemplation is the stage where consumers may be unwilling to change however motivational interviewing works very well in this stage of change and in the contemplation stage.
Contemplation

- Consumer is uncertain – ambivalent
- May meet you halfway – willing to explore
  - Discuss and weigh the pros & cons
  - Emphasize client free choice/responsibility
  - Elicit self-motivational statements
    - Ask questions that prompt motivation – i.e., “When you have made changes in the past, how has that worked? What are some things you think of when you make changes?”
    - Let the consumer discuss other behaviors he/she wants to change

- Goal is to support self-efficacy.
Preparation

• The consumer asks questions, indicates willingness and considers options to change
• There is a shift from “thinking about it” to making actual plans
  • Interventionist acts as a guide in the process
  • Clarify goals and strategies
  • Offer a menu of options
  • Negotiate a contract or plan
  • “Would you be willing to consider starting with a small plan? Let’s see how that might look.”

• Goal is to collaborate and plan goals together.
Action

• The consumer takes steps toward change— motivation waxes and wanes.

• Consumer is receptive – but is still unstable.
  • Negotiate an action plan
  • Acknowledge difficulties & support attempts
  • Identify risk situations, and coping strategies
  • Help find new reinforcers for change
  • Support perseverance

• Goal is to affirm and positively reinforce the behavior change.
Motivational Interviewing Principles

• Express Empathy
• Develop Discrepancy
• Roll with Resistance
• Support Self-Efficacy
Express Empathy

- Empathy is communicating understanding of the consumer’s point of view.
- Empathy is not having had the same experience.
- Empathy builds the working alliance.
- Skillful reflective listening is essential.
Develop Discrepancy

- Between where the consumer is now and where they would like to be.

- Point out contradictions without pressing or without giving our opinion or advice.

- Separate the behavior from the person and how important personal goals are being undermined by the behavior (i.e. not working)
Knowledge Check – Developing Discrepancy

• Developing discrepancy is one of the principles of motivational interviewing. This is done by:

  • A. Sharing the all the reasons the consumer should work
  • B. Carefully listening to the consumer
  • C. Focuses on reflecting where the consumer wants to be and where they are currently.
  • D. Both B and C
Knowledge Check-Answer

• The correct answer is D.
• Both B and C are correct. To help the consumer see the difference between where they are and where they want to be, requires very careful listening. The consumers own words and ideas should be used rather then “telling” them what to do.
Roll with Resistance

- Righting reflex: it is human nature to want to fix a problem when you see someone struggling, but...

- ...it is also human nature to resist others’ efforts to control you (psychological reactance).

- Direct confrontation of resistance tends to generate more resistance.

- So...when faced with resistance, don’t argue, deflect. This avoids the consumers arguing for change and allows them the opportunity to explore his/her own solutions.
Support Self-Efficacy

- Belief in the possibility of change is an important motivator.

- The consumer is responsible for choosing and carrying out personal change.

- Emphasize consumer’s strengths/ability to choose.
Motivational Interviewing

Concepts

Methods

OARS
  • Open Ended Questions
  • Affirmations
  • Reflections
  • Summaries
Open Ended Questions

- Opens the door to exploring issues
- You are working towards building trust and rapport
- Consumer does a majority of the talking
- Your initial responses will influence the direction of how conversations go
- How, When, Where
- No more than 2 questions in a row
Knowledge Check - Questions

Which questions are open-ended?

1. Don't you think you should be on time?
2. What kind of work have you done in the past?
3. Do you want to get a job?
4. What does your available schedule look like?
5. What is your dream job?
Knowledge Check - Answer

- Which questions are open-ended?

1. Don't you think you should be on time?
2. What kind of work have you done in the past?
3. Do you want to get a job?
4. What does your available schedule look like?
5. What is your dream job?
Affirmations

- Definition: appreciation, understanding, support, admiration

- Affirm *effort* and *achievement*
- Emphasize a strength
- Catch them being good
- Should be genuine
- Express positive regard and caring
- Strengthen therapeutic relationship
Reflections

- Are statements rather than questions
- Make a guess about the consumer’s meaning (rather than asking)
- Yields more information and better understanding
- Conveys empathy
- Reflective listening tends to de-escalate people
- Often a question can be turned into a reflection by tone of voice

**Should be at least twice as many reflections as questions.**

- Short stems
  - “You…”
  - “So you…”
  - “It’s like…”
  - “You feel…”
# 3 Building Blocks of Reflecting Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>Content/thought or paraphrasing</th>
<th>“So you have had a bad week at work.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect feelings</td>
<td>“Sounds like your feeling stressed out.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect meaning</td>
<td>“Because of your work schedule, it is important to you to have a late appointment.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summaries

• Summaries are a special form of reflective listening.
• Give the message that the consumer is being heard.
• Allow the consumer to add important information.
• Give you a chance to be directive—focus on what you want to highlight.
• Shift the direction of the interview.
Tipping the Ambivalence Scale

Change
Talk

Sustain
Talk

Change
Talk
Case Study and Demonstration

• Tanya is a 24-year old woman who was part of a sheltered workshop and in need of a job in her community. She had limited work experience and was hesitant about working but her Support Coordinator knew she could work successfully in the community. Tanya was ambivalent about getting a job because she was unsure if she could handle the schedule and the job responsibilities. During the Intake meeting Tanya was informed of the services she was eligible for and a motivational interview was conducted. Initially, Tanya was very shy and barely said anything at all but as she got more comfortable with her support coordinator she was able to communicate her worries and goals. Following the time the coordinator spent with Tanya identifying her goals they started preparing for a job search.
Credits

• Dr. Tina Christine Chasek
  • UNK Associate Professor
  • chasekc1@unk.edu

• Department of Behavioral Health
References


https://www.researchgate.net/publication/27333771_Employment_as_a_Social_Determinant_of_Health_A_Systematic_Review_of_Longitudinal_Studies_Exploring_the_Relationship_Between_Employment_Status_and_Physical_Health


