

From Ambivalence to Action: Enhancing Motivation and Readiness in Clients Navigating Behavioral Challenges

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Methods & Materials: Lecture, Small and Large Group Discussion, Guided Applied Case Study

Objectives

1. Analyze the underlying mechanisms of ambivalence and resistance in compulsive behavior disorders and articulate how MI's relational spirit and technical processes combine to foster self-directed change.
2. Apply advanced verbal responses, including complex strategic reflections and the intentional softening of sustain talk, to engage clients presenting with high levels of shame, minimization, or resistance.
3. Apply the process of focusing to collaboratively establish and prioritize person-centered goals within the therapeutic relationship.
4. Design MI-consistent care plans that leverage discrepancy development, values exploration, and collaborative goal-setting to support the transition from preparation to active recovery.

Program Description

Ambivalence is a defining feature of compulsive behaviors, individuals often find themselves caught in a painful tug-of-war between the urge to engage in a habit and the desire to stop. For providers, moving a client past this hesitation requires more than just advice; it demands a strategic, compassionate conversational approach. This 3-hour breakout session serves as a comprehensive overview designed to elevate your understanding of the mechanics of change, unpacking exactly how MI's relational mindset and technical components work in tandem to shift clients from problem recognition to self-directed action.

Going beyond basic definitions, this session explores how to navigate the complex psychological landscape of behavioral harm, including client shame, minimization, and fluctuating readiness. Participants will learn how to integrate complex MI strategies, such as strategic reflections and the selective reinforcement of change talk, to soften sustain talk and enhance intrinsic motivation. You'll leave equipped to develop discrepancy, explore core client values, and collaboratively set goals that smoothly guide individuals from a place of stuck ambivalence straight into meaningful action.

Moving beyond theory, this session provides practical, hands-on training in foundational Motivational Interviewing (MI) skills. Attendees will learn how to bypass resistance, build deep rapport, and strategically evoke "change talk." By the end of this workshop, you will be equipped with brief, stage-matched interventions designed to meet individuals exactly where they are—allowing you to effectively handle sustain talk and celebrate the incremental victories that pave the way to long-term harm reduction and recovery.

Eligible for 3 CEUs from the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board (OCDPB)