



Video Transcript: Implementing Motivational Interviewing in Hennepin County: A Case Study Video

Speaker 1 (00:00): Implementing Motivational Interviewing in Hennepin County: A Case Study Video. This video was produced by the Reproductive Health National Training Center, RHNTC. Motivational Interviewing, also referred to as MI, is a person-centered, evidence-based communication method. It is a flexible, behavior change approach that gives youth the opportunity to ask questions or get support in a one-on-one setting. Meet Emily and Sharai with Better Together Hennepin, a project funded by the Office of Population Affairs, OPA, to replicate evidence-based programs and services for adolescents of Hennepin County, Minnesota. Better Together Hennepin uses motivational interviewing as part of their Health Mentor Model.

Speaker 1 (00:49): How does motivational interviewing, or MI, fit into Better Together Hennepin's Health Mentor Model?

Emily (00:56): There's four different tiers of support for the Health Mentor Model, the first is that we do evidence-based classroom sex education. We do small group work using youth development principles. That small group work is really meant to be responsive to the school or the site. In the one-to-ones, we use motivational interviewing, so that's where that fits into our Health Mentor Model. And they can also... one-to-ones has a lot of where they provide referrals to supportive services within Hennepin County, depending on what's going on with the young person. And then finally, we do systems work, really specific activities at each location. It varies from site to site, just based on the needs at that site. And the goal is to create safe and supportive environments at both sites for the young people who are there.

Speaker 1 (01:45): Where do you use motivational interviewing, or MI?

Emily (01:49): Schools, Clinics, and we also work at the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center. And we find motivational interviewing works really well in all three of these settings.

Speaker 1 (02:00): What is motivational interviewing, or MI?

Sharai (02:03): MI is about being collaborative, so coming in alignment with the young person and their intrinsic goals and motivation with whatever situation that they're coming into that space in. Along with it being person-centered, it also addresses ambivalence and change, so when young people are coming up to us with so many different mixed emotions and stuck feelings, they often don't really know which direction they want to go, and it's up to the practitioner to really pull out those skills and those values and then help move them to what's in their own alignment. So MI is useful in a wide range of conversations and is particularly useful to help examine those situations and options for any young person. So like I said, that ambivalence is normally high. So a young person might come in and they are just like, "I really want to make a change, but I don't know where to start or I don't know where to begin." But sometimes you'll hear those nuggets of behavior change, or we call it "change talk," and it's up to the practitioner to really grab on to them and help move them into a space of confidence so that they actually can stick to the decisions that they want to make. So, another thing is confidence can be low and people doubt their abilities. So a key component with MI is staying in the spirit and giving affirmations to the young person. So a lot of times young people don't have a trusted adult or someone that can actually see the value in their situation or understand and meet them with empathy about what they're going through.

Sharai (03:33): So it's up to us to say like, instead of criticizing their behavior and telling them what they should do, we say, "well, you really value that," or "I can see that's really important to you," so that their guard is lowered, so that ambivalence decreases, so then you can start to have those moments of change talk to move them to better decision making. So another characteristic is desire is low and people are uncertain about whether they want to make a change or not. And I think always a great sign, especially in MI, because it is... voluntary, but a lot of them already have something they want to talk about or some point of connection that they really want to make, but they just don't really know what is the best choice for them or haven't really gotten clear on their own values around that situation. And then importance is low and the benefit of change and disadvantage of the current situations are unclear. So a lot of times, young people are getting mixed messages from their peers, from their family, and it's... the goal of the practitioner to really sift that out for them, help them hear their own voice clearer so that they can make those decisions in the long term that benefit them.

Speaker 1 (04:43): How do you use motivational interviewing, or MI?

Sharai (04:47): The core component that we always highlight in our work is the Spirit, MI really relies on being collaborative and person-centered, being appropriate to their culture and their age and they're ingrained values that this young person has during that. So the Spirit is really about empathizing with that young person, being a trusted adult, being non-judgmental and drawing out the priorities and values of the participant instead of sharing your own values and priorities. So, staying in the Spirit is really a core component. We also, in the Spirit, focus on the strengths— and back to those affirmations— and we also do simple reflection. So all of that is just saying like, "I see that you're doing really well, I see that you care about this, I really value you sharing that information with me." And then those simple reflections are "tell me more, what else are you experiencing?" Or whatever they're saying, you're just mirroring that same conversation back to them. "Sounds like you're upset with your parents," and then young people normally take that as a springboard for that change talk, to either tell you more about themselves, which is staying in that person-centered element so that we're not, as a practitioner, coming in and putting our own values back on to the young person. It's also about Partnership. So like we said, MI is collaborative, and MI is about helping people make that change and that every individual is the expert of their own lives. Evocation, so evoking those values out of that young person. So people have within them those resources and skills that they already need for the change, but often can't see it for themselves, so it's our job as the practitioner to be person-centered, really centering their own internal wisdom in their values and just putting those different supports around them so that they can be successful. So if they're saying, like they only feel comfortable communicating through text, then maybe we always initiate them journaling or trying to write their emotions out to process whatever they're going through. Just simple skills that they already align with, that they're telling to you in that session. So it's a dance. It's a constant conversation where you're listening and pulling out those values and trying to get them to their own internal change talk. Another one is Acceptance, so the MI practitioner takes a non-judgmental stance and seeks to understand the person's perspective and experience, expresses empathy, highlights those strengths again, and respects the person's right to make an informed choice about the change or not change. So the other thing about MI that's really important is like not every conversation is going to end in a decisional action. It's just about really allowing them to continue to see their own values and staying alongside them for when they are ready to make those big choices, that they have those resources and support when that time comes. And then the last one here is Compassion, so the MI practitioner actively promotes and prioritizes the client's welfare and well-being in a selfless manner. So, another good analogy is when people say to walk a mile in their shoes, they're often still looking from their own lens instead of asking a person like, what do those shoes feel like? And really putting your perspective to the side and allowing for their values to come out.

Speaker 1 (08:20): How are your motivational interviewing (MI) practitioners trained?

Emily (08:25): Our health mentors are not therapists, and so they are really providing a combination of education, and then also just having these motivational interviewing guided conversations. They can start doing one-to-ones using motivational interviewing after taking Beginner training, but we ask that everybody get trained within six months with Intermediate. And the reason we allow them, we don't make them do Intermediate first, is because the Intermediate training is much more meaningful when they've had just a little bit of practice and a little bit of experience with the MI, and then the intermediate training makes so much more sense.

Speaker 1 (09:01): Learn more at [RHNTC.org](https://rhntc.org).