

Motivational interviewing (MI)

Planning a Conversation That Leaves Choice With the Client

Clinicians | 10 to 15 minutes

Motivational interviewing involves a collaborative approach to exploring change. This planning page helps you listen for the person's perspective and avoid turning uncertainty into a contest. Use the client's words, including reasons to maintain the current situation.

Choose one upcoming conversation. Draft a permission question, a balanced reflection, and a way to ask what the client wants next.

Ask and reflect

Try: 'Would it be useful to talk about this today?'
Reflect both sides without adding a verdict: 'It offers relief, and you are concerned about what follows.'
Invite correction.

Elicit the next choice

Ask what matters to the person and what, if anything, they want to explore. Offer information with permission, then ask how it fits. A decision to revisit later can be meaningful.

1. What permission question will I use?**2. What reasons for and against change have I heard in the client's words?****3. What reflection could communicate understanding without persuasion?****4. How will I ask the client to choose the next step or pause?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Avoid using MI language to secure compliance with a predetermined outcome. Clarify genuine external requirements separately from personal choice. Medical risk and urgent safety assessment remain necessary; this worksheet is not a fidelity or competence assessment.

Original educational resource. Adapt with a clinician; not a validated assessment or complete treatment protocol.

Conceptual references: S07. Full sources are in the online preview and collection appendix.

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