

# Motivational Interviewing Guide

Motivational Interviewing (or “MI”) is a way of talking with people about change and growth to strengthen their motivation and commitment.<sup>1</sup>



## Four Tasks

**Engaging:** An active interest in understanding what the person is experiencing from their point of view.

**Focusing:** The process of developing a shared direction by exploring ways to move forward.

**Evoking:** Drawing out and strengthening the person’s own “why.”

**Planning:** Exploring the “how” once there is momentum towards change.

## OARS Skills

**Open-Ended Inquiry:** How are you taking care of your mental health? What have you considered? In what way does this align with your goals?

**Affirmations:** You have been very adaptable. You seem determined to find a solution. You are willing to hear some treatment options.

**Reflections:** I am hearing you want to... Sounds like you are thinking...

**Summary:** Collect and link key words or phrases, especially those in favor of change.

## The Motivational Interviewing Spirit



**Compassion** • expressing empathy to understand what it is like for the other person.

**Partnership** • shifting from sole expert to guide, collaborating with the person’s own expertise.

**Empowerment** • helping the person realize their own strengths, abilities and knowledge.

**Acceptance** • actively supporting and encouraging the person’s autonomy.

<sup>1</sup>Miller WR, Rollnick S. Motivational interviewing: Helping People Change and Grow, 4th ed. New York, NY: Guilford Press; 2023

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## Change Talk

Change talk is any speech that favors movement toward a particular change goal. For example:

I want to have more energy. (**Desire**)

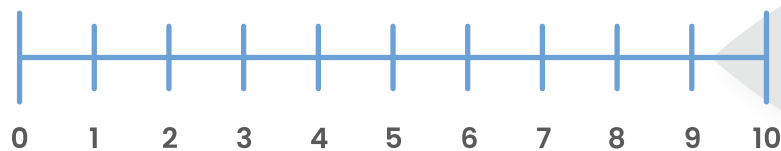
I could look into treatment options. (**Ability**)

My family is important to me. (**Reasons**)

A person's motivation is driven by their desire, ability, reasons, and need for change. Listen for it, actively invite it, and attend to it with the Motivational Interviewing Spirit and OARS Skills.

## Readiness Ruler

Start by asking, "On a scale of 0 to 10, how **important** is it for you to do X?" or, "On a scale of 0-10, how **confident** are you that you can do X?"



Next, meet the person where they are in their response, not where you'd like them to be: "What makes your confidence a three and not a lower number?" Or "Tell me why you chose a two for importance rather than a zero or one?"

## Ask-Offer-Ask

Giving information or advice aligns with Motivational Interviewing when done skillfully by respecting autonomy and supporting empowerment.

1. **Ask an inviting question such as:** "Would you be open to hearing about...? What would you most like to know about...?"
2. **Offer information**
3. **Ask a supporting question such as:** "How has this impacted your thinking? Where do you want to go from here?"

## Summary

When using Motivational Interviewing, strive for curiosity over cleverness. Ambivalence is a normal experience, and confrontation usually strengthens commitment to the status quo. Proficiency in Motivational Interviewing is an iterative process of practice (daily conversations!) and feedback (change talk from the other person!).