

Coercive Control Advocacy Interviewing



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Advocacy Interviewing: Course Description

This course equips advocates to better support survivors by giving them a framework and place to practice and refine interviewing skills related to advocacy.

Motivational Interviewing skills can be used by advocates to:

- assist with validating survivors' experiences
- providing the freedom to choose the best options for their marriages/relationships and children.



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Advocacy Interviewing: Objectives

Identify tools and skills to be able to handle your initial and ongoing contact with survivors and how to integrate the information you gather

Learn principles of effective interviewing in advocacy, including what traps to avoid

Learn how to identify and facilitate stages of change


Expand on the skills and procedures needed to help survivors identify and move toward their goals

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Goals of Interviewing




Establish Rapport




Gather Information Efficiently



Formulate Advocacy Needs



Assess for Safety



The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out. (Proverbs 20:5)

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Relationship Building


- Building **trust and rapport** can take time, especially with a coercive control history
- We want to communicate to survivors up front:
 - Our role as advocate
 - Here as a support (not just "critical" needs)
 - What we can offer
 - The 3 Es
 - Consistency/contact is important
 - We let survivors lead/initiate contact
 - Protocol if we haven't heard from a survivor in a few months



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Listening



Back to the
slow to speak
and slow to anger
James 1:19

Listen 90%

Provide input 10%

- First contact—allow 90 minutes for survivor to tell her story

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Listening 90%

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Advocate's Posture

- Hold sacred space
- Be non-judgmental
- Validate survivor's experience
- Equip/empower to help her
- Support survivor's decision making
- Support survivor's conscious choices
- Support survivor as she takes back her life/identity
- Be comfortable with ambivalence

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Advocate's Mentality

Attitude toward the survivor:

- An advocate must respect, value, and accept the survivor as a human being and where she is on her journey.

Working hypothesis:

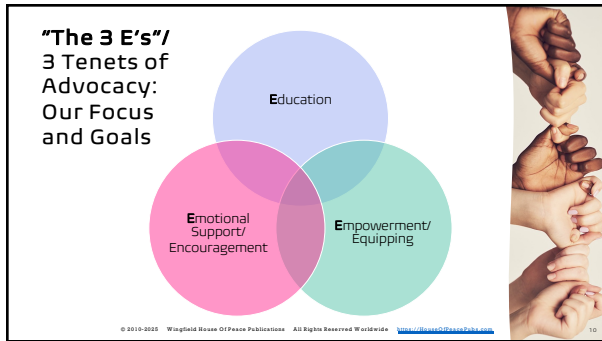
- The survivor has the capacity to deal constructively with her problems.

Guiding principle of advocacy:

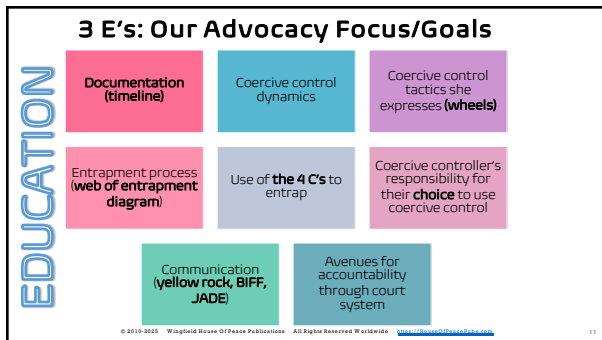
- Take on the internal frame of reference of the survivor.

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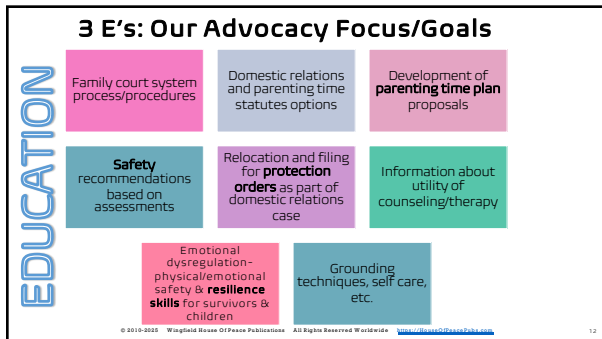
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EQUIP/ EMPOWER

3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

Regain their agency and autonomy through:

- meeting with advocate and/or support group to gain knowledge of coercive control, CC tactics, and healing processes for themselves and their children
- hold sacred space for survivors while they struggle through the multiple challenges of healing
- use interviewing skills learned in this course to validate survivors' experiences and provide freedom to make their own choices
- address pros and cons to help encourage her in her decision making

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EQUIP/ EMPOWER

3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

Helpful reminders:

- the survivor is capable of standing up for herself and using her voice
- choices they have made to bring their case as close as possible to their beliefs about what is best for their children and for themselves

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EMOTIONAL SUPPORT/ ENCOURAGEMENT

3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

- Assisting survivors with processing emotional stressors and finding their own solutions.
- We can support survivors in many areas that are often dismissed by attorneys as irrelevant to their work, including:

parenting	communicating with their soon-to-be-ex (STBX) or ex	medical decisions
education decisions	extracurricular decisions	religious decisions

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EMOTIONAL SUPPORT/
ENCOURAGEMENT

3 E's: Our Advocacy Focus/Goals

therapy/
counseling
issues

talking with
their clergy
member or not

changing
churches for
safety or lack
of support

court issues

communicating
with attorney or
court

deciding to use
a specific
attorney or go
"pro se"

deciding whether
to involve other
court
professionals in
their case

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BREAKOUT

The 3 E's: Where do you see yourself using these in your advocacy work?



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Initial Intake Interview Overview

CTPM Intake Coordinator or Intake Advocate completes initial advocacy intake interview and provides relevant resources

Covers coercive control history, lethality assessment, current concerns, and goals.

During the initial contact, start with an open-ended invitation such as, **"Tell me about your situation..."**




Be patient.
Just like a
puzzle,
it takes time
for all the pieces
of your life to
come together.

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Initial Interview Topic Examples

- Basic Information
- Current Coercive Control Pattern
- Danger Assessment
- Psycho-Social History/Risk Factors
 - Family History
 - Childhood Problems
 - School history
 - Employment History
 - Medical History
 - Mental Health History
 - Faith Background/Supports if applicable
 - Coercive Control History
 - Criminal/Legal History
 - Substance Abuse and Other Addiction History
 - Current Relationship
- Family Court Involvement- Custody/Parenting time
- Personal Goals and Strategies to obtain them



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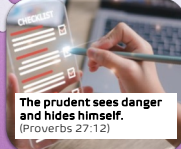
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Danger Assessment Methods

CTPM's Intake form contains a Danger Assessment
<https://www.dangerassessment.org/DA.aspx>

Mosaic Threat Assessment
<https://www.mosaicmethod.com>

Types of Coercive Control Assessment Checklist
<https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/cc-assess/>



The prudent sees danger and hides himself.
 (Proverbs 27:12)

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Consultation Use

Consultation if affiliated:

- Advocate Coordinators
- BAND group
- For family court cases- with Dr. Debra and Dr. Jess

Consultation if unaffiliated:

- Monthly Q&A class
- Facebook networking group



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Interviewing Skills applied to CC Survivors

- ✓ Preparing yourself for the interview
- ✓ Attending, listening, action skills- Revisiting the Basics
- ✓ Tune in
- ✓ Approaches
- ✓ What is CC advocacy interviewing vs. traditional interviewing?
- ✓ Why are specialized Interviewing Techniques/Skills needed?
- ✓ What is survivor resistance in CC Advocacy?


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The Value of Listening

Our Lord listens to us!

- **He will call on me, and I will answer him;** I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. (Psalm 91:15)
- I love the Lord, for **he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.** Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. (Psalm 116:1-2)
- During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. **God heard** their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. (Exodus 2: 23-24)




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Reciprocal Nature of Interviewing

Social Facilitation

- We tend to act like those around us.
- If the interviewer is tense, the interviewee will be tense; if the interviewer is relaxed, it can help the interviewee to be more relaxed.
- Works during interviews, as well as during crisis interventions or anytime people interact for extended periods of time
- Also seen in social and developmental psychology




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Reciprocal Nature of Interviewing

Social Facilitation

- Since social facilitation has a strong behavioral influence on both the interviewer and the interviewee, it is easy to see that it can lead to bias in an interview.
- A "good" interviewer will be aware of the power of social facilitation and remain calm and in control regardless of the interviewee's behavior.



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Co-regulation is your response to another in the midst of a distressing situation.

Trauma Treatment Collective

You can't offer co-regulation without self-regulation.

Trauma Treatment Collective

Co-regulation Skills

1. Attunement and Responsive Relationship
2. Emotional and Physical Safety
3. Teaching and Modeling Self-Regulation Skills

Trauma Treatment Collective

Co-Regulation



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BREAKOUT

Scenario: Your survivor tells you she was strangled by her coercively-controlling spouse. What do you notice in your...

Mind,


Body, &

Spirit?


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DEBRIEF



What skills have you learned in class to help you manage activation?



What are the top 3 that are your favorite/have helped you?



What are the top 3 you want to have in your toolbox to be able to help your survivors?

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Principles of Effective Interviewing

Interpersonal influence

- the degree to which one person can influence another

Is related to interpersonal attraction

- the degree to which people share a feeling of understanding, mutual respect, or similarity



If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. (Proverbs 18:13)


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Principles of Effective Interviewing

RESPONSES TO AVOID

- Revictimizing responses-**
 - Statements that increase stress
 - Judgmental statements
 - put survivors on guard
 - communicate approval or disapproval of survivor
 - Evaluative statements
 - also communicate approval or disapproval
 - may inhibit self-disclosure



AVOID JUDGEMENT

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Principles of Effective Interviewing

RESPONSES TO AVOID

2. **Probing statements-**

- Avoid "why..." questions
- Cause defensive responses
- May require respondent to reveal more than they are comfortable revealing
- In general, "how" is better than "why"
- At times, probing statements are necessary, but should be made with care



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Principles of Effective Interviewing



RESPONSES TO AVOID

3. **Hostile statements-**

- Unnecessary if trying to gather information
- May be used in a "stress interview," but not to be done without experience in this area

4. **False reassurance**

- Avoid giving a person reassurance when it is possibly unwarranted
- "Everything will be alright."

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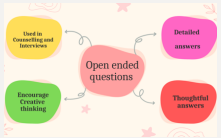
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Principles of Effective Interviewing

EFFECTIVE RESPONSES

✓ **Open-ended questions**

- those that are unable to be answered specifically
- better than closed-ended questions that can be answered specifically
- promote the flow of information
- provide a wide range of area for the advocate and survivor to explore



Open Ended Questions & Prompts


- ✓ What happened when...?
- ✓ How did you...?
- ✓ What would happen if...?
- ✓ What do you think about...?
- ✓ What would you do...?
- ✓ Tell me about...
- ✓ I wonder if...

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The Value of Questions vs Giving Direction

Notice that Jesus rarely answered questions with a direct answer (only 3). Instead, he responded with challenges and questions to elicit contemplation. In fact, he asked over 330 questions in the Gospels, while he was only asked 183.



We have 100 examples of Jesus asking questions. Why do you think He asked so many questions?

Good Questions Help Groups Talking

- Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out?" (Matt. 12:10-11)
- "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?" (Matthew 15:2-4)
- "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? So, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:9-11)

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Asking the right questions....

- Did he hit you?
- Why did you respond that way?
- Why don't you leave? Why do you continue to stay?

vs.

- What happened that led you to seek help for domestic abuse/coercive control?
- Tell me in your own words what happened before things escalated?
- What happened during the escalation? What did you do?
- What was happening with the children when this occurred?
- How was the church notified about what happened?
- How did the church respond?




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Priority of Asking Questions and Seeking...

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. (Jeremiah 33:3)



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BREAKOUT

Roleplay Practice Asking Questions

Scenario: You are speaking with a survivor for the first time.

- What question do you ask to open up the conversation?
- How do you reflect back what you heard her say?
- What is your next question to move the conversation forward?

First open-ended question

↓

Reflection

↓

Follow up open-ended question

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DEBRIEF

Practice Asking Questions

What did you learn about your style?

- Tendency to ask closed-ended questions?
- Tendency to ask "why" questions?



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Principles of Effective Interviewing

Ways to keep interactions flowing:

- Transitional phrases
- Verbatim playback
- Paraphrasing and restatement
- Summarizing
- Clarifying
- Empathizing / Demonstrating understanding

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Effective Interviewing: Ways to Keep Interactions Flowing

- 1. Transitional phrases**
 - "I see"... "Mmm hmm"
 - Sometimes are not effective
 - Best to back up to something relevant to what the interviewee just said
- 2. Verbatim playback**
 - Repeats information that interviewee just stated
 - Reinforces the fact that you are listening
 - Also useful in that using the interviewee's words "connects" you to the interviewee

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Effective Interviewing: Ways to Keep Interactions Flowing

- 3. Paraphrasing / Restatement**
 - rephrasing the content of what has been said
 - reinforces that you are actually listening
 - "checks in" with the client, to make sure that you've interpreted the information correctly
- 4. Summarizing**
 - paraphrasing combined with reflection
 - pulls together the meaning of several responses
 - used to organize previous information
 - can be used to direct the interview

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Effective Interviewing: Ways to Keep Interactions Flowing

- 5. Clarification**
 - asking questions to better understand statements made during interview
- 6. Reflection / Empathy / Understanding**
 - rephrasing the feelings associated with what has been said
 - reinforces listening
 - verifies feelings

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BREAKOUT

Roleplay Practice Listening Skills

Continue with previous scenario.

- How can you move the conversation along using paraphrasing, summarizing, clarification and reflection?

Paraphrasing & Reflecting

↓

Check-ins to make sure you're understanding correctly (Clarification)

↓

Summarizing

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DEBRIEF

Practice Asking Questions

What active listening skills did you use?

- How did you do with listening 90%?
- What information did you provide?




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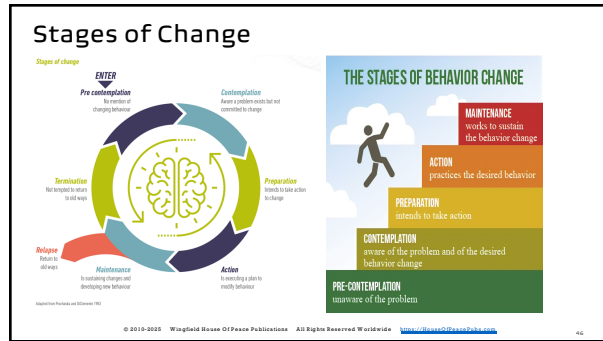
Motivational Interviewing for Coercive Control Survivors

- What is MI?
- Stages of Change— The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Change
- Readiness to Change
- MI Strategies & Traps to Avoid



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The Stages of Change

Precontemplation – Lack of acknowledgement that there is a problem behavior that needs to be changed

Contemplation – Acknowledgment that there is a problem but unsure of wanting to make a change

Preparation/Determination – Getting ready to change

Action/Willpower – Changing behavior

Maintenance – Maintaining the behavior change

Relapse – Returning to older behaviors and abandoning the new changes

Relapse and Recycling – Slipping Back to Previous Behavior and Re-entering the Cycle of Change

Termination – Leaving the Cycle of Change

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CHAT QUESTION

- Where have you noticed that the stages of change are happening with the survivors you're working with?

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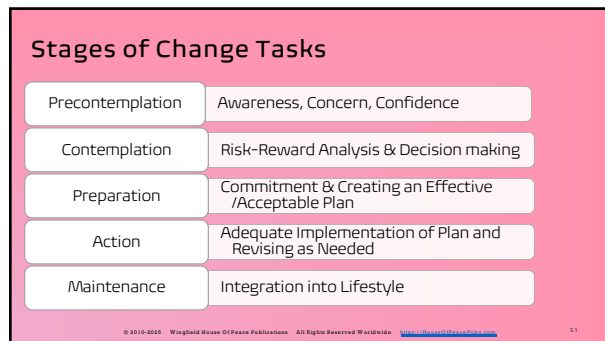
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BREAKOUT

Stages of Change

Scenario: *You have been working with a survivor for several months and she seems stuck on wanting help for her husband who has a mental health problem, and that with that help he will stop being abusive.*

- What stage of change is she in?
- How will you help her move forward with her life to the next stage of change?
- What questions or information will you provide her?

Assessing Stage of Change

↓

Determining Task for Stage of Change

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Facilitating Movement

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How to Pay Attention to the Process of Change

- Clearly identify their personal goal
- Evaluate stage of readiness to change
- Evaluate beliefs and practices related to their goal
- Examine routes and mechanisms of influence in the culture and for the individual
- Create sensitive stage-based multi-component interventions
- Re-evaluate regularly the process of change




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Processes of Change

- ✓ Change is the engine that enables movement through the stages of change
- ✓ Doing the right thing at the right time
- ✓ Cognitive/behavioral processes during early stages
- ✓ Behavioral processes in preparation, action and maintenance



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Processes of Change

Experiential Processes

- Related to the person's thought processes
- Generally seen in the early Stages of Change

Behavioral Processes

- Action-oriented
- Usually seen in the later Stages of Change

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Psalm 12:2)

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...and once readiness is present, little else may be needed.

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Context of Change

- Situational Resources & Problems
- Cognitions & Beliefs
- Interpersonal Resources & Problems
- Family & Systems
- Enduring Personal Characteristics

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Decisional Balance Worksheet

	Benefits/Pros	Costs/Cons
Making a Change		
Not Changing		

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Confrontational Approaches

Argue that the person has a problem and needs to change


Offer direct advice or prescribe solution to the problem without the person's permission or actively encouraging them to make their own choices

Use an authoritative/expert stance, leaving the survivor in a passive role

Does most of the talking, or functions as a unidirectional information delivery system

Impose a diagnostic label

Behave in a punitive or coercive manner



A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his own opinion.
(Proverbs 18:2)

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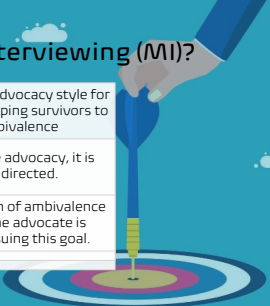
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What is Motivational Interviewing (MI)?

A directive, survivor-centered advocacy style for eliciting behavior change by helping survivors to explore and resolve ambivalence

Compared with non-directive advocacy, it is more focused and goal-directed.

The examination and resolution of ambivalence is its central purpose, and the advocate is intentionally directive in pursuing this goal.



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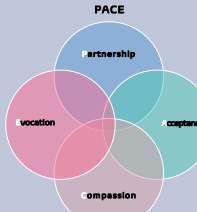
The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

Motivation to change is elicited from the survivor, and the advocate refrains from pushing for change.

It is the survivor's task to articulate and resolve his or her ambivalence. The advocate's task is to facilitate the survivor's choice to do things differently.

Direct persuasion is an ineffective method for resolving ambivalence.

The advocacy style is generally a quiet and eliciting one.



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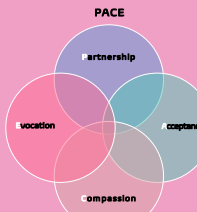
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The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

The advocate is directive in helping the client to examine and resolve ambivalence.

Readiness to change is a fluctuating product of interpersonal interaction.

The advocate relationship is more like a partnership or companionship than expert/recipient roles.




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Specific and Trainable Advocate Behaviors

Characteristic of MI Style:

- Seeking to understand the survivor's frame of reference, particularly via reflective listening
- Expressing acceptance and affirmation
- Eliciting and selectively reinforcing the survivor's own self-motivational statements, expressions of problem recognition, concern, desire and intention to change, and ability to change
- Monitoring the survivor's degree of readiness to change and ensuring that resistance is not generated by jumping ahead of the survivor.
- Affirming the survivor's freedom of choice and self-direction



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Parallels between Biblical Counseling, Advocacy Interviewing & MI Principles

These principles **overlap in certain areas**, especially in their relational approach (though the underlying philosophy differs):

ACBC/Nouthetic

1. Build loving involvement // rapport
2. Share Biblical hope // encourage
3. Gather relevant data // interview topics for intake
4. Evaluated the problem Biblically // interview topics
5. Assign practical homework // personal goals & strategies to obtain them

(Adams)

ABC

1. Love as Christ would love // rapport
2. Discern the trouble as Christ would discern // interview topics & safety assessment
3. Identify a Biblical response // interview topics, & safety assessment
4. Exhort faithful life in Christ // Educate & Equip
5. Counsel for the moment: **(We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.** -1 Thess. 5:14)

- admonish or warn
- teach
- exhort
- bear patiently
- encourage
- comfort

(Henderson)

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General Principles of MI

- Express empathy
- Listen reflectively
- Develop awareness
- Ask meaningful questions
- Avoid argumentation
- Roll with resistance
- Provide selective feedback
- Affirm self-efficacy

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Express empathy for the client

Develop discrepancy between the client's goals and values and their current behavior, particularly regarding substance use

Avoid argumentation and direct confrontation

Roll with client resistance, instead of fighting it

Support the client's self-efficacy, or their belief that they can change

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4 Foundational Processes of MI

ENGAGING

The relational foundation

Shall we walk together?

FOCUSING

Guiding to a target behavior that is important to them

Where shall we go?

EVOKING

Drawing out their intrinsic motivation and own ideas for change

Why are we going there?

PLANNING

The bridge to change

How will we get there?

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MI: Interaction Skills (OARS)

OARS: Four Core Skills of Motivational Interviewing

Open questions	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote trust for enhanced communication For example, "What concerns do you have ...?"
Affirmations	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validate positive attributes, efforts, etc. For example, "You've done a great job with..."
Reflections	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate active listening and invite exploration For example, "I see this upsets you..."
Summaries	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bundle concluding reflections; invite elaboration For example, "Let me summarize what I heard you say; please let me know if it's correct..."

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The Flow of Change Talk

```

graph LR
    MI[MI] --> Prep["Desire, Ability, Reasons, Need (Preparatory)"]
    Prep --> Mobil["Commitment, Activation, Taking Steps (Mobilizing)"]
    Mobil --> Change[Change]
  
```

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Confrontation is the Goal- not the Style

- Goal of MI:** is to increase ambivalence about coercive control to support the change process.
- Research shows survivors become resistant when advocates use strategies inappropriate for survivors' current stage of change.
- We change the MI strategies to fluctuate with readiness for change.
- The goal = have the survivor argue for change.

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"ROLL WITH RESISTANCE!"

Avoid arguing for change
 Countering resistance usually strengthens it
 View resistance as a signal to respond differently

“ [In MI] we roll with resistance that arises when clients have felt their autonomy or self-worth threatened and either reflect their concerns or change our strategies. ”

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Effective Motivational Approaches

Giving **ADVICE** Removing **BARRIERS** Providing **CHOICE**
 Decreasing **DESIRABILITY** Practicing **EMPATHY** Providing **FEEDBACK**
 Clarifying **GOALS** Active **HELPING**

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Giving Advice


Give	Give advice only when individuals are likely to be receptive.
Target	Target advice to the stage of change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly identify the problem or risk area. Explain why change is important. Advocate for specific change.

ADVICE

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Removing Barriers



Bolster self-efficacy

Address logistical barriers




Carry each other's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.
(Galatians 6:2)

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Provide Choices



It's the individual's choice:

- Whether to change
- How to change


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Decrease Desirability

Help individuals:

- Decrease their perceptions of the desirability of maintaining the behavior
- Identify other behaviors to replace the positives of current behavior

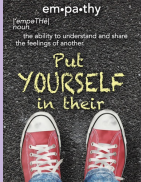


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Practicing Empathy

- ✓ Develop and communicate an understanding of the individual's situation and feelings around the behavior
- ✓ Explore pain around the behavior
- ✓ Empathy communicates acceptance, while supporting the process of change.
- ✓ Acceptance facilitates change.
- ✓ Advocate seeks to build up rather than tear down.
- ✓ Skillful reflective listening is fundamental to expressing empathy.



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Providing Feedback

Help the individual identify and understand relevant:

Risks of the behavior	Negative consequences of the behavior
-----------------------	---------------------------------------

When the cares of my heart are many,
your consolations cheer my soul.
(Psalm 94:19)




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Clarifying Goals

Help individuals weigh:

Pros and cons of their behavior
Pros and cons of changing their behavior in light of <u>their</u> goals for the future



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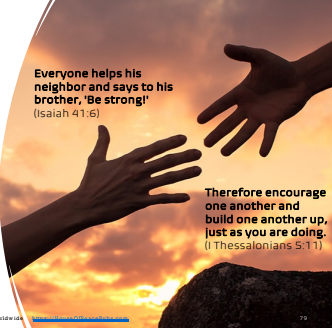
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Active Helping

Without assuming responsibility for behavioral change, extend yourself and show you care.

Everyone helps his neighbor and says to his brother, 'Be strong!' (Isaiah 41:6)

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (I Thessalonians 5:11)




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Some MI "Traps"

Signs of survivor counter-motivation might include:

interrupting	ignoring	arguing
denying	talking about seemingly unimportant matters	daydreaming
reminiscing	"wondering aloud"	



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Types of Traps to Avoid

- Question/Answer Trap
- Confrontation/Denial Trap
- Expert Trap
- Labeling Trap
- Premature Focus Trap
- Blaming Trap




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The Question-Answer Trap

- Reinforces the survivor being in a passive role, waiting for the advocate to figure out the answer
- Encourages brief answers, without the additional info needed for MI
- Open-ended questions w/o reflective listening responses can have the same effect
- Generally, avoid asking 3 questions in a row.



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Confrontation-Denial Trap

If an advocate takes one side of the argument (to change) then the survivor who is not ready will take the other side of the argument (to stay the same).

In this way, the conversation builds more denial and resistance.

The goal is to reflect what the survivor is saying and AVOID listing the reasons a person should change.



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The Expert Trap

MI as a collaboration, instead of the advocate imparting wisdom.

Survivor is the expert on his/her situation

Similar to the question-answer trap in placing the survivor in the passive role

Avoid shifting prematurely to prescribing solutions, & doing problem-solving



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The Labeling Trap

While some survivors benefit from accepting a label like "victim" or "survivor," this is unnecessary for each survivor's success.

Pressuring survivors to accept a label can reflect a power struggle in which the advocate attempts to assert control.

Other buzzwords can elicit resistance, e.g., "your problem."


The MI approach de-emphasizes labeling.



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The Premature Focus Trap



Trying too soon to focus in on leaving a coercive-controlling relationship as the main issue may elicit much increased resistance.

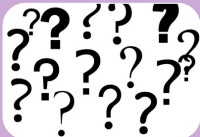
Better to start with the survivor's concerns- likely to eventually lead back to coercive control issues




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The Blaming Trap



Survivors in advocacy may be very focused on figuring out who is to blame for the problem.




It can be useful to tell the survivor that advocacy is about figuring out what are healthy choices for their lives (and their children).

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Reasons for Relapse

- Lack of Willpower/Experience
- Environmental Pressures
- Situational Cues
- Inadequate skills
- Lack of Support for Change
- Problematic Self-Efficacy
- Part of the Process of Change

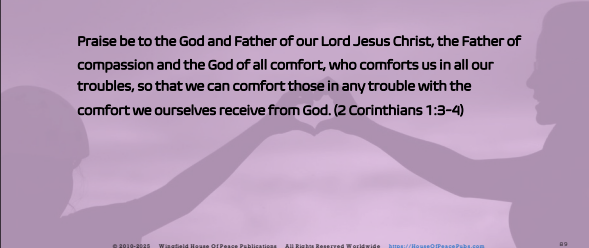


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Advocacy and Listening Bring Comfort

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)



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From Contemplation...

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To Action!



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