



Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a way to help people recognize and do something about their present or potential problems. It is intended to help resolve ambivalence (particularly useful to change-reluctant persons) and to get a person moving along the path to change.

In motivational interviewing, the worker does not assume an authoritarian role - responsibility for change is left with the individual. The strategies of motivational interviewing are more persuasive than coercive, more supportive than argumentative. The worker seeks to create a positive atmosphere that is conducive to change. The overall goal is to increase the tenant's intrinsic motivation, so that change arises from within rather than being imposed from without.

In this approach, the tenant is treated with great respect and as an ally rather than an opponent. Motivational interviewing is about helping to free people from the ambivalence that entraps them, yielding repetitive cycles of self-defeating and self-destructive behavior.

FIVE GENERAL PRINCIPLES

EXPRESS EMPATHY: Acceptance facilitates change. Skillful reflective listening is fundamental. Ambivalence is normal.

DEVELOP DISCREPANCY: Awareness of consequences is important. Discrepancy between behavior and goals will motivate change. Tenant should present the arguments for change.

AVOID ARGUMENTATION: Arguments are counterproductive. Defending breeds defensiveness. Resistance is a signal to change strategies. Labeling is unnecessary.

ROLL WITH RESISTANCE: Momentum can be used to good advantage. New perspectives are invited but not imposed. Tenant is a valuable resource in finding solutions to problems.

SUPPORT SELF-EFFICACY: Belief in the possibility of change is an important motivator. Client is responsible for choosing and carrying out personal change. There is hope in the range of alternative approaches available.

Adapted from *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People to Change Addictive Behavior*, by William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick

Note: This document is included within the *Supportive Services* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at www.csh.org/toolkit2. This document has been adapted from the HUD-funded curriculum *Case Management Services*, which is available at www.csh.org/training.