

Principles of Motivational Interviewing

Principle 1: Express Empathy

Expressing empathy towards a participant shows acceptance and increases the chance of the counselor and participant developing a rapport.

- Acceptance enhances self-esteem and facilitates change.
- Skillful reflective listening is fundamental.
- Participant ambivalence is normal.

Principle 2: Develop Discrepancy

Developing discrepancy enables the participant to see that her present situation does not necessarily fit into her values and what she would like in the future.

- A participant rather than the counselor should present the arguments for change.
- Change is motivated by a perceived discrepancy between present behavior and important personal goals and values.

Principle 3: Roll with Resistance

Rolling with resistance prevents a breakdown in communication between participant and counselor and allows the participant to explore her views.

- Avoid arguing for change.
- Do not directly oppose resistance.
- New perspectives are offered but not imposed.
- The participant is a primary resource in finding answers and solutions.
- Resistance is a signal for the counselor to respond differently.

Principle 4: Support Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a crucial component to facilitating change. If a participant believes that she has the ability to change, the likelihood of change occurring is greatly increased.

- A person's belief in the possibility of change is an important motivator.
- The participant, not the counselor, is responsible for choosing and carrying out change.
- The counselor's own belief in the participant's ability to change becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.