

What is Motivational Interviewing?

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a directive style of communication that provides patients with the opportunity to create change in behaviors by dialoging in a non-judgmental atmosphere. This atmosphere invites patients to consider making changes in his-her behaviors and elicits intrinsic motivation for change (as opposed to providers telling patients what they must change). (Miller & Rollnick, 2002).

MI is a paradigm shift for many of us, especially those trained in a prescriptive style of communication. We engage in MI as we dialogue with people about many areas of behavior change. MI is not a technique, and it is not a switch that we turn on and off.

We talk about the “*Spirit of Motivational Interviewing*” which includes the following:

- Person-centered approach;
- Invitation to a collaborative partnership between patient and provider;
- Listening more than telling:
 - eliciting information rather than instilling;
- Placing the responsibility for change with the patient and not the provider;
- Being respectful:
 - asking permission,
 - honoring autonomy,
 - resourcefulness, and
 - providing the ability to choose or make decisions;
- Avoiding coerciveness;
- Increasing intrinsic motivation through thoughtful dialogue and careful listening.

