



# MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING: WHAT'S IN IT FOR PATIENTS? WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

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## BACKGROUND

- Motivational interviewing (MI) consists of a set of techniques that can be used to "help patients to explore and resolve ambivalence."<sup>1</sup> It is a person-centered, guiding approach to helping people strengthen their motivation for change.<sup>2</sup>
- Beyond the techniques, however, the most important aspect of using motivational interviewing is embracing the motivational interviewing spirit.<sup>3</sup>
- Our group of Canadian hemophilia nurses received training in motivational interviewing techniques and made a commitment to embrace the motivational interviewing spirit with their patients to explore how motivational interviewing could enhance their therapeutic relationships.

## How MI Am I?

- Am I genuinely interested in people?
- Am I able to accept other people as they are or do I have a desire to direct or change them?
- Am I willing to understand others?
- How comfortable am I in letting go of being an expert?
- How able am I to let go of solving others' problems?
- How confident am I that patients have inner resources to change?<sup>4</sup>

## AVOIDING THE EXPERT TRAP

**ISSUE:** Hemophilia nurses can easily fall into the expert trap, since they need to relay lots of information to patients in a short amount of time, knowing they will only see patients once or twice per year.

**ROLE OF MI:** Honouring the patient position as expert is an effective technique for allowing patients to express their needs and ideas.

**RESULT:** This approach made patients feel heard and more empowered to move in a positive direction with a plan of care that they owned.



## MAKING IMPLICIT PERMISSION EXPLICIT

**ISSUE:** Too often in health care we assume the expert role and presume to know what is the best plan for our patient. Hemophilia nurses often do this without checking in about their opinions or feelings.

**ROLE OF MI:** Rather than presuming consent, the spirit of motivational interviewing helped us to explore patients' views and ask permission before acting. Sometimes this was as simple as asking permission to close the door or to perform routine tasks.

**RESULT:** We have discovered that when nurses make implicit consent explicit, this results in greater trust and openness between the nurse and patients.



## PATIENTS TRANSITIONING FROM PEDIATRIC TO ADULT TREATMENT CENTRES

**ISSUE:** The stress related to the transition from childhood to adulthood is heightened for those with a chronic illness. When patients with a bleeding disorder transfer from a pediatric to an adult treatment centre, some patients appear uninterested in their medical condition. They sometimes miss their appointments and avoid contact with the centre.

**ROLE OF MI:** Recently, we introduced motivational interviewing into our practice in the hope that interacting in the spirit of motivational interviewing would be useful in increasing engagement for our new patients at the time of transfer.

**RESULT:** We were delighted to observe that by using this approach patients appeared more enthused and more engaged in expressing change talk towards improving their health.



## USING AUTONOMY TO IMPROVE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIPS

**ISSUE:** When hemophilia nurses interview patients using a traditional approach, we tend to adopt an expert attitude. The patient is viewed to be in need of information, so we provide this information. This can result in the hemophilia nurse being the most motivated person in the room, leaving the patient in a passive state or often in a defensive state.

**ROLE OF MI:** In motivational interviewing, the concept of autonomy support means the responsibility for change is left with the patient.

**RESULT:** Using autonomy support, we observed that patients proactively offered suggestions for changing their behaviour to improve outcomes when managing their bleeding disorder.

## CONVERSATION MAKEOVERS WITH MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

**ISSUE:** In typical conversations with patients, hemophilia nurses may wish their patients were more participatory and motivated.

**ROLE OF MI:** We compared and contrasted the use of traditional and motivational interviewing techniques to explore how outcomes varied depending on the technique used.

### Without MI

How have you been?  
Any bleeds? Let's get your vital signs. Any procedures coming up?

### With MI

I have a number of items that I'd like to cover at your annual review today, but I'm wondering what's most important to you and where you would like to start?

## REFERENCES

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**Conclusion: Embracing the spirit of motivational interviewing helped patients take charge of their own care, fostered trust between nurse and patient, helped nurses feel more authentic in their roles, and facilitated difficult conversations.**

*"Motivational interviewing is a way of being with people, ... its underlying spirit lies in understanding and experiencing the human nature that gives rise to that way of being." – Rollnick and Miller<sup>3</sup>*

**Baxter**

**Acknowledgement:** The authors received unrestricted support from Baxter Corporation for the preparation of this poster.

**Disclosures:** The authors have no relevant conflicts of interest to declare.

