



Motivational Interviewing (MI) Quick Reference Guide

A Story About Change

We may encounter participants standing on the dock of ambivalence, thinking about making a change—that change is represented by the island on the horizon.

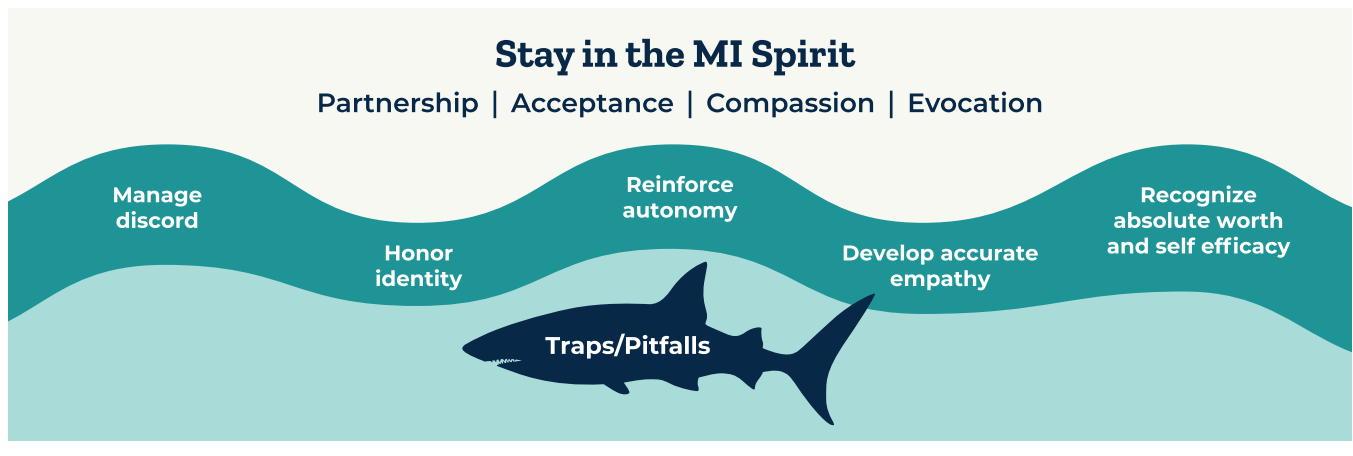
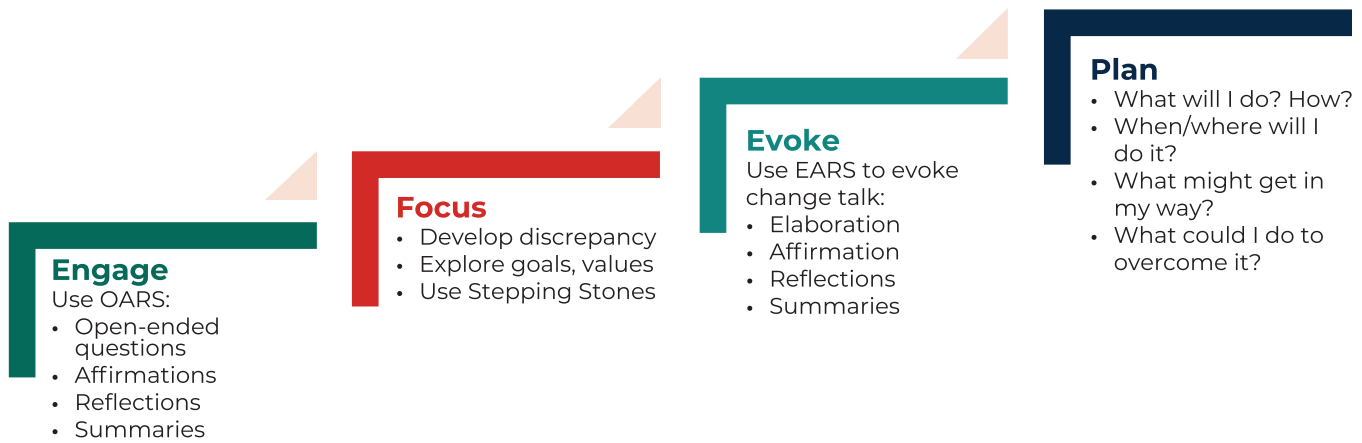
Our role is to help them explore their ambivalence about making the trip. We **ENGAGE** them in the **Motivational Interviewing (MI) SPIRIT** and establish a trusting relationship. If we do this skillfully, they may choose to get in the boat and head toward Change Island. Or they may clarify for themselves that Change Island is not for them right now.

We use **FOCUSING** strategies to zero in on where participants want to go and **EVOKE** how they want to get there.

We continue to use our **OARS** to help the participant move toward Change Island, eliciting their Desire, Ability, Reason, Need, and Commitment to make the trip (**DARN-C**).

We guide the participant through the steps of creating a **PLAN** and apply **GOAL4 IT!** strategies to build skills and review progress.

Lastly, we think ahead to what might take us off course (pitfalls and traps) to avoid any “sharks” in the waters on the way to Change Island.



Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change. It is a way of structuring conversations to help participants address and explore ambivalence towards change.

MI has two components: the relational component and the technical component.

The *relational component* is called the MI spirit. This is the way practitioners are grounded in how they show up and engage participants in a conversation about change.

Partnership	Meeting the participant “where they are” while sharing power and collaborating
Acceptance	Reinforcing autonomy (choice); practicing accurate empathy; recognizing and stating the participant’s efforts, strengths, and traits through affirmations, and validating worthiness through conveying absolute self-worth
Compassion	Working with the participant to achieve what is in her/his best interest while placing the practitioner’s agenda aside
Evocation	Drawing out ideas, interests, reasons, solutions, and such about the change. This assumes the participant has some expertise to offer

The *technical component* includes the specific skills and strategies used to execute the MI spirit.

The four fundamental processes allow us to structure the conversation using the steps below:



OARS: MI often uses the method of OARS as an effective way to invite and assess a participant's ambivalence and intrinsic motivation towards a particular change.

Open-ended questions	Invites more information and opportunities to tell the story.	Examples: How do you feel; Tell me more about that, etc.
Affirmations	Statements that highlight a person’s strengths, character traits and efforts.	Examples: You are courageous; That demonstrates your resiliency; That speaks to your commitment.
Reflections	Demonstrate active listening, accurate empathy, convey deeper meaning beyond what is stated.	Examples: You are feeling unsure about what lies ahead; You are frustrated; It feels like an uphill battle.
Summaries	Collecting, linking, and tying together statements from the discussions to clarify and confirm the participant’s views while guiding.	Example: You hope that being on MFIP provides you an opportunity to gain employment and stability with childcare.

Ambivalence is feeling two ways about a topic and is often present when considering a change. The role of the practitioner is to assist the participant in exploring and potentially resolving the ambivalence. In doing this, change talk (reasons to participate in the change) and sustain talk (reasons to maintain the status quo) emerge as a natural part of the conversation. As practitioners using MI, the goal is to validate the difficulty and reasons for maintaining the status quo while being attentive and responsive to the reasons for change.

Change Talk (DARN-C): The more a practitioner can draw out a discussion of the person’s desires, abilities, reasons, and need to change a certain behavior, the more likely the participant will be to move in that direction. Practitioners should actively listen for the DARN-C categories of change talk and reflect them back to the participant.

Using Goal4 It!™: After eliciting and strengthening a participant’s commitment to change, develop an actionable plan using the Goal4 It! tools.

Desire	Ability	Reason	Need	Commitment
				
<p>I want...</p> <p>I wish...</p> <p>I'd like to...</p> <p>get a job</p>	<p>I can...</p> <p>I did...</p> <p>I could...</p> <p>stay sober.</p>	<p>If...then...</p> <p>If I had stable housing then I could get my kids back.</p>	<p>I need...</p> <p>I have to...</p> <p>I've got to...</p> <p>get my degree.</p>	<p>I am ready...</p> <p>I will...</p> <p>I plan to...</p> <p>participate in my plan.</p>

Practitioners can respond to change talk by using EARS as demonstrated below:

Elaborate	Invites more change talk when we use any of the evocative strategies to elicit change talk.	Examples: Tell me more about that; How would you go about making that change; What would it take to achieve that goal?
Affirmations	Statements that highlight a person's strengths, character traits and efforts.	Examples: You are courageous; that demonstrates your resiliency; speaks to your commitment.
Reflections	Demonstrate active listening, accurate empathy, and convey deeper meaning beyond what is stated.	Examples: You are feeling unsure about what lies ahead; You are frustrated about your options; It feels like an uphill battle.
Summaries	Collecting, linking, and tying together statements from the discussions to clarify and confirm the participant's views while guiding.	Example: You are hoping that being on MFIP provides you an opportunity to gain employment and stability with childcare.