



# Motivational Interviewing

A Client-Centered Counseling Technique for Promoting Cessation Attempts



Individuals who are unwilling to make a quit attempt may need unique support to overcome barriers to quitting. Common barriers to quitting include lack of information about the harmful effects of tobacco use and the benefits of quitting, lack of support for cessation, and demoralization due to a previous relapse.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a client-centered counseling intervention which has been shown to increase future quit attempts in individuals who are resistant to make a quit attempt. MI explores a client's feelings, beliefs, ideas, and values regarding tobacco use in an effort to address ambivalence about quitting. MI elicits *change talk* (reasons, ideas, and needs for quitting), and *commitment language* (intention to take action) from the client which lessens resistance to quitting and promotes change.

This document serves as a reference sheet for the basics of MI, including general principles and techniques.

## Four General Principles of Motivational Interviewing

### Express Empathy

Explore concerns and benefits of quitting. Seek to understand, and normalize feelings and concerns. Support the client's autonomy and right to choose to accept or reject change.

### Develop Discrepancy

Highlight discrepancy between client's present behavior and expressed values and goals. Reinforce change talk and commitment language. Build and deepen commitment to change.

### Roll with Resistance

Back off and use reflection when the client expresses resistance. Continue to express empathy. Ask permission to provide information. Resist the urge to provide unsolicited advice, argue, or correct.

### Support Self-Efficacy

Help the client identify and build on past successes. Offer options for achievable small steps toward change. Foster empowerment and self-confidence in quitting.

*Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, person-centered form of guiding to elicit and strengthen motivation for change. Developed by Miller and Rolnick, 1983.*



# Motivational Interviewing (MI)

## 5 R's of Motivational Interviewing

**Relevance**  
 Explore what's important to the client's disease risk, family, and social situation. Get Specific

**Risks**  
 What negative consequences of tobacco use does the client identify? Explore short term, long term, and environmental risks.

**Rewards**  
 In the client's perspective, what are the potential benefits of stopping tobacco use?

**Roadblocks**  
 What are barriers or impediments to quitting? Problem solve with the client to address these challenges.

**Repetition**  
 Repeat each time an unmotivated client visits the clinic. Most people make repeated quit attempts before successfully quitting.

## Four Strategies of Motivational Interviewing

**Open Ended Questions**  
 Facilitate dialogue. Convey that the client's perspective is valued. Move from broad to specific questions using "how," "what," "tell me about," and "describe" as question starters.

**Affirmations**  
 Sincerely support the client. Acknowledge challenges and strengths. Validate the client's experience and feelings. Emphasize past experiences that demonstrate strength and success to prevent discouragement.

**Reflective Listening**  
 Begins with a way of thinking, coming from an interest in what the client says and a desire to understand. Pause to check if what you understood from the client is what they intended to convey.

**Summarize**  
 Listen carefully and reinforce what the client has said. Link together the client's feelings of ambivalence and promote a perception of discrepancy. Summaries help the client organize their thoughts and move forward.



California Youth Advocacy Network  
[info@cyanonline.org](mailto:info@cyanonline.org)  
 (916) 339-3424  
[cyanonline.org](http://cyanonline.org)



[facebook.com/cyanfan](https://facebook.com/cyanfan)  
[twitter.com/CYANonline](https://twitter.com/CYANonline)

