

# Game Changer: Motivational Interviewing



*Motivational Interviewing Interactive Exercise*

## A New Type of Conversation

Imagine having a conversation with your medical team that empowers you to consider a healthy lifestyle change, and supports you in making that change. Now, you don't have to imagine – this can happen with a conversational skill known as “Motivational Interviewing (MI).”

“MI is a way to connect with another person on their change journey,” said Scott Nyegaard, certified MI Network Trainer. “It is not about fixing or changing people because I see the need or want, instead it is about recognizing and embracing their personal reasons to change and helping them walk that path. Unfortunately, the more common approach taken is the 'Expert Role', a very ineffective way to help someone change. We spend years teaching healthcare providers medical knowledge and technical information, yet often miss teaching about the very human side of the interaction. MI includes that human side of change and gives practical and effective tools to empower the person to embrace their own change.”

MI helps patients articulate what is most important to them, as well as their confidence related to a change. It puts patients in the driver's seat and encourages them to consider and achieve positive, sustainable changes leading to long-term health.

To integrate this conversational skill into area organizations, PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H) has offered health and human service professionals one to two annual MI trainings for the past six years. PS4H contracts with MI trainers certified by the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT) to offer the trainings in Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Perham and Moorhead. The training begins with a two-day Level I training. After 60-90 days, training continues with a one-day Level II training where participants pair up to utilize their new skills during a taped interview session. The interview is graded and

reviewed with the participant during a 70-minute personal coaching session.

## Results

Lynn Halmrast, LP, LPCC, LMFT, ICPS, a consultant with Summit Guidance, received his MI training through PS4H in 2016 and is spreading the word about his experience:

“I appreciate the excellent manner in which this valuable mental health intervention tool was presented for participants. I have shared my enhanced knowledge and skills gained through the MI training opportunity with a number of my mental health professional colleagues.”

According to Sanford Health Pelican Rapids Clinic Manager Rita Cowie, the clinic is noting improved patient outcomes. “Patients are making changes that are reflected in clinic measures related to diabetes and hypertension,” Cowie said. “From June 2015 to June 2016, diabetic-related clinic scores improved by 10 points, moving them closer to the Sanford Health goal, and as of June 2016, hypertension-related clinic scores rose to 93 percent, surpassing the Sanford Health goal of 90 percent,” she added.

Cowie believes that participation in the PS4H MI trainings has contributed to these improved patient outcomes. “There have been a lot of changes made to get these scores better and they are improving every month,” she said. “Our new providers rock! I feel the MI that we have learned has contributed to improving scores of the less motivated patients.”

Christine Phillips, Sanford Health Pelican Rapids RN Health Coach, completed MI training in 2011, and noted that while the MI process is effective, change can still take time. “I had a patient stop into the clinic who I haven't worked with for a while,” Phillips said. “She wanted to thank me for all the support I have given her. We have been working for a couple of years on weight loss with little success, and with each of our interactions I would utilize motivational interviewing. She finally decided it was time to make some changes and wanted me to know that she had lost 15 pounds so far. Even though it took some time for the changes to be made, I feel that motivational interviewing helped the patient make the changes when she was ready.”

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