Motivational Interviewing Training



Jessica M. Cronce, Ph.D.

Session 5:

Managing Sustain Talk and Discord, Developing a Change Plan, and Consolidating Commitment

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Demonstrate skills necessary to manage sustain talk and discord throughout an MI session.
2. Describe skills to develop a change plan.
3. Describe skills to strengthen commitment to a change plan.



“Rolling with Resistance”

- Resistance = **sustain talk** and **discord**.
- Change talk and sustain talk are 2 sides of the same “ambivalence” coin.
  - Change talk = supports change
  - Sustain talk = supports the status quo.
- When someone is ambivalent, **sustain talk is *expected***.
- **Discord is *not expected***.
  - Excusing, arguing (**“Yeah, but…”**), interrupting, disengaging, etc.
  - Signals a failure of strategy or understanding.



Roadblocks to active listening (Gordon, 1970), many of which can prompt **discord**

- Ordering, directing, or commanding
- Warning, cautioning, or threatening
- Disagreeing, judging, criticizing, blaming
- Shaming, ridiculing, or labeling
- Interpreting or analyzing
- Withdrawing, distracting, humoring, or changing the subject
- Generic approving or praising
- Reassuring, sympathizing, or consoling
- Persuade with logic, arguing, or lecturing
- Giving advice, making suggestions, or providing solutions
- Questioning or probing



Responding to Sustain Talk and Discord

- **Responding to <u>sustain talk</u>**
  - Selectively "ignore" it (don't reinforce it) by reflecting other aspects of what the student has said.
  - Ask a question to elicit change talk.
- **Responding to <u>discord</u>**
  - Reflect the student's emotion or concern or offer an affirmation.
  - Make a statement that supports the student's autonomy.
  - Apologize (*for metaphorically stepping on their toes*).



Responding to Sustain Talk and Discord

- **Responding to <u>sustain talk</u>**
  - **Student:** Hangovers are just the price of admission.
  - **Facilitator:** What benefit might you see, if any at all, to having fewer hangovers?
- **Responding to <u>discord</u>**
  - **Student:** I don't have a problem with alcohol! I'm not sure why I have to be here.
  - **Facilitator:** It's frustrating that you had to take time out of your day to be here and to talk with me when you're drinking is under control.
  - (If the student agrees with my reflection, I might next ask: *So, why do you think you were asked you to attend this session?*)



Exercise 5.1: Responding to Sustain Talk and Discord

- Use the **MI Session 5 Exercise Worksheet** to:
- (a) identify whether the statement is sustain talk or discord, and
- (b) generate at least one reflection to each statement.

- Example: **"I've got it under control."**
  - This statement is probably an example of **discord**. The student may be implying that the facilitator was stating *they didn't have it under control* or *that they had a problem.*
  - Possible reflection: **You make sure you only have the experiences you want when it comes to your drinking.**
  - Possible reflection: **You're worried I might think your drinking is causing you problems.**



Need more time for Exercise 5.1?

If you need more time, please pause the video now and resume it when you are done with Exercise 5.1



Developing a change plan

- Timing is everything!
  - Too soon = back-peddling
  - Too late = lost momentum
- Test the waters with a **summary of change talk** and an evocative question: ***What's next?*** – stay mindful of the student's reaction!
- In a time-limited context (i.e., brief intervention), offering a **menu of options** that underscores autonomy may be helpful.

What if the student doesn't choose to change?

- When would you know if it was time to make a change? How would you know if your drinking was becoming something you didn't want it to be?
  - Student articulates "signs" drinking is problematic for them.
- How might you keep track if those things are happening?
  - Guide student in discussion of why/how to track behavior.
- What would you do if you noticed those things start to happen?
  - Guide student in developing a plan for making a change or seeking resources.



What if the student chooses to make a change?

- "You're interested in making a change at this point. What would that change look like?"
  - If student gives vague response like "Cut back":
    - **Guide the student in making the goal behaviorally specific (*so they can know if the goal is achieved*)**: "You indicated you typically drink # drinks when you go out. If you were to cut back, how many drinks might you have instead?"
    - Most helpful to ground goal related to # drinks ***in BAC***, to avoid specific undesired outcomes.
  - When student gives you a specific goal:
    - Reflect the goal
    - "What might you do to achieve that goal? What resources might you need to help you?
    - What might get in the way of your plan?



Problem-Solving the Plan

- Support the student's efforts to problem-solve obstacles and be patient—rushing to offer your solutions might set you and the student back (i.e., *decrease* motivation).
- Don't forget to keep supporting self-efficacy…
  - Affirmation
- …and "rolling with resistance" (*check your righting reflex!*).



Consolidating Client Commitment

- Remember DARN is useful, but **we are trying to get to CATs**! *Expressed commitment* is related to behavior change.
- If you aren't hearing CATs, ask for it:
  - C: **What would you do** if you were still experiencing [undesired outcome]?
  - A: If your plan didn't work—you were still experiencing [undesired outcome], **what might you do** next?
  - Ts: **What have you already tried** that you think will be helpful in avoiding [undesired outcome]?



Exercise 5.2: Planning while Rolling with Resistance

- Listen to the audio recording (**7:52** long) at: https://casaa.unm.edu/download/session4.mp3
- Or, if you prefer, you may read the transcript of the recording at: https://casaa.unm.edu/download/session4.pdf
- Be listening/reading for the following things, which I will ask you to describe in the **MI Session 5 Exercise Worksheet** :
  - (a) the target behavior (i.e., what could be the focus of change);
  - (b) the two sides of the client's ambivalence;
  - (c) the main barrier to change expressed by the client;
  - (d) what the client commits to doing.
  - (e) **at least three** other things the facilitator **could have done (that they didn't do)** to elicit, strengthen, and consolidate commitment?
- **Please pause this video now** and complete the exercise. **Resume this video once you have finished Exercise 5.2.**



Please download and complete the **MI Session 5 Post-video Reflection** now.

Reminder: Be sure to sign up for **Session 6**

Don’t forget to submit all of your MI exercises, carefully following the instructions for file names and how to submit.

