

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing occurs in two phases, with somewhat different, albeit overlapping goals. Phase 1 involves building intrinsic motivation for change. If the person is starting far down the mountain slope of motivation, this can feel like a long and gradual process, perhaps like snowshoeing upward one step at a time. At some point, importance peaks enough to begin talking about strategies rather than reasons for change. This begins Phase 2, involves strengthening commitment to change and developing a plan to accomplish it. This often the easier task, more like skiing down the other side of the summit, and the challenge is akin to avoiding moguls, trees, and cliffs on the way down.

Because the overall goal in Phase 1 is to resolve ambivalence and build motivation for change, the amount of work to be done will depend on the person's starting point. Some people come to VR already quite convinced that there are ample reasons for them to make a change, and there is little left to do in Phase 1 except to gain a clear understanding for the reasons from the client's perspective. There is no point in prolonging Phase 1 if the person is ready to ski.

This is the time to assess a person's confidence in his or her ability to change. A client's motivation to change can easily be determined by one simple method of gradations from 1 to 10, by asking

"How important would you say it is for you to _____? On a scale from 0 to 10, you could do it? On the same scale from 1 to 10, where 0 is not important and 10 is extremely important, where would you say you are?"

"And how confident would you say you are, that if you decided to _____, you could do it? On the same scale from 1 to 10, where 0 is not confident and 10 is extremely confident, where would you say you are?"

These questions will help you determine the client's readiness to begin Phase 2, developing the plan and strategies for the change.

As we learn new strategies for helping clients to make positive changes in their lives, we are learning how to enhance our own lives to become better listeners and catalyst for change.

Revised by Cindy Wagner

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from "Motivation Interviewing" by Miller and Rollnick