

# Motivational Interviewing for Loved Ones

Parents can do this!

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## Overview

What is motivational interviewing?

MI Spirit

The Righting Reflex

MI Building Blocks: Reflections and Questions

Can Parents do this? Yes!

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## What is “Motivational Interviewing”?

- “MI” is a communication style widely used by health professionals to talk about making healthy changes – research shows it works!
- Developed with the goal of increasing motivation for treatment among people with substance use disorders
- MI is based on the idea that the best way to influence another person’s behavior is by respecting their independence and creating space for them to explore their own motivation for change.
- We’ve taken the most important concepts from and created “MI for Loved Ones”

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## Why would parents be interested in “MI”?



“Putting your foot down” isn’t getting the result you want.

Though we can’t control others, we can control ourselves – we can try new behaviors to “clean up our side of the street.”

Our BEST tool for influencing others’ behavior is to show them that we believe in their ability to make (and follow through on) great decisions – that’s what MI is all about.

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## “MI for Loved Ones”

- With tons input from MI experts as well as parents of youth with substance use and mental health problems, I’ve created a curriculum called “Motivational Interviewing for Loved Ones”
- MILO teaches basics of MI including the MI “spirit” and skills such as using reflections and questions that get kids talking and pull out their internal motivation for change
- My team and I meet with parents either one on one for 4 hours, or in a virtual group of 6-10 for 8 hours
  - Training for professionals is usually ~24 hours

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In order to consider a healthy choice or a change, people need to feel:

**Understood**

“My stepdad never assumes... he tries to see my point of view”

**Confident**

“I think I can really pass the math course this time”

**In Control**

“No one can make me do things – I’m old enough to decide for myself”

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## Who do you go to?

- Poll#1

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## We Call this the Righting Reflex

What is the Righting Reflex?

When we see loved ones struggling, we have a powerful desire to fix things

Our "righting reflex" can take the form of fixing the problem, giving unwanted advice, or minimizing our loved ones' problems




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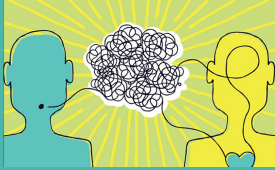
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## Building Understanding Confidence & Control



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## Tool #1: Reflections

Convey empathy and careful listening



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## WHAT IS A REFLECTION?

- A Statement, Not a question
- Specific – not generic
- Repeat back what you heard the person say, or guess at the feelings beneath
- Helps the person:
  - Feel understood and accepted,
  - Hear their words think a little deeper about what they meant.



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## Reflections Don't Judge



- Reflections are different from praise – they don't evaluate whether someone met expectations
- Reflections don't indicate whether you agree/disagree
- As we get older, we like appreciation ("thank you") more than evaluation ("good job")

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## REFLECTION EXAMPLES

All my friends do it. So, it's not a big deal. Just get off my back, okay?

- Smoking weed seems normal to you.
- You feel like I'm making a big deal out of nothing.
- My concerns are annoying to you.

Medication makes me stupid, it's bad for my brain.

- It makes you feel stupid.
- You had problems thinking clearly when you tried it before.
- You don't think medication can help you.

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## Reflections Practice

Poll #2

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## Tool #2: Asking Curious Questions

Get curious about another's perspective and values



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## Question Examples

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS  
get people talking

Examples:

- Can you tell me what's behind that?
- How does that affect you?
- Help me understand how you feel.
- What do you like about X?
- What do you not like about X?

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## Open vs. Closed Questions

Instead of this (Closed)

- Are you feeling better today?
- Did you take your medications?
- Are you going to go to your therapy appointment today?

Try THIS (Open)

- What did you do today?
- What's going on with your medications?
- How has therapy been lately?
- What do you see as the pro's and con's of meeting with your therapist today?

Open ended questions get people talking & help you to learn about their perspective.

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## Questions Practice

Poll #3

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## Real-Play



- "Real-Play" concept
- Simone wants to get back into dancing, which she used to do seriously in high school and college
- "Mom" asks her to explain more about what is getting in the way

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### Listen as this Parent:

- Reflects key points and values
- Asks an open-ended question
- Listens as Simone finds some unexpected motivation!
- Encourages her to pursue her idea




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### MILO Research Studies

- So far, we've only offered MILO in the context of research studies to test whether this intervention is feasible and effective
- I'm going to present some exciting interim research results here!

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### Two Formats: Group & Individual

- Group study is finished enrolling (sorry!)
- 1:1 coaching for parents of youth with recent-onset psychosis (with or without marijuana involvement) still enrolling




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## Outcomes: What do we want parents to get out of attending?

- Reduced stress
- Higher confidence
- Less conflict with family
- Less resentment and "helicopter" attitude toward their children: "Expressed Emotion"

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## Expressed Emotion

- Expressed Emotion is a strong predictor of youth mental health outcomes – if parents have **high** EE, youth are more likely to have **persistent** or **more severe** mental health issues



- EE has 2 facets: Emotional Overinvolvement ("helicoptering") and Criticism
- Is "MI Spirit" (understanding & autonomy) the conceptual opposite of EE...?

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## Preliminary Results

- Results are interim in that not all participants have finished the course or their follow-up assessments
- I am presenting data from 40 participants who have completed the course so far and 24 who completed additional assessments 12-weeks later
- All findings are from the GROUP training

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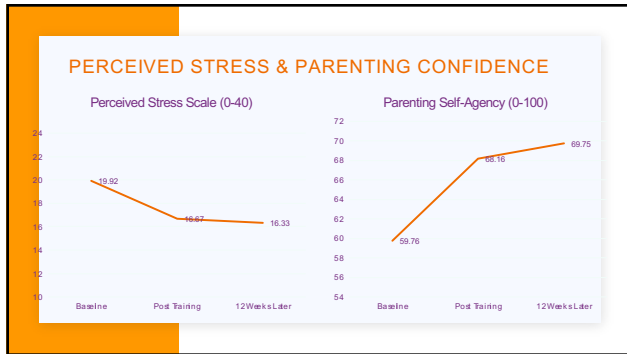
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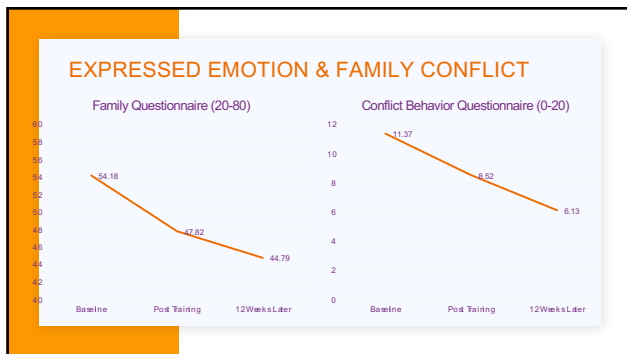
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### INTERPRETING INTERIM RESULTS

- In a year when everyone – especially moms – has become incredibly overwhelmed and stress, these participants are truly swimming upstream
- I hope that learning some MI skills has something to do with that!
- MI skills training appears to lower parents' expressed emotion
- Next step: Does MI skills competence (rated via "real-plays") moderate impact on parents' mental health?

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Learn more or get in touch:

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Thank You!

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