The possibilities of motivational interviewing for supporting disaffected children and young people
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Dr Cathy Atkinson, University of Manchester

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What is MI?

- A counselling technique developed within medical settings to help people with addiction problems

- Based on the idea that people are not necessarily always in a state of readiness to change their patterns of drinking, smoking, drug use, exercise or diet (Miller & Rollnick, 2002)

- Assumes that most people who need to make a change are ambivalent about doing so and see both reasons to change and reasons not to (Miller & Rollnick, 2012)

- Acknowledges that there may be strong reasons why a person chooses to maintain a particular behaviour

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“Motivational Interviewing is a person-centred counselling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change”

Miller & Rollnick (2012)
Motivational Interviewing in Educational Settings


- May be particularly useful in casework referrals where the impetus for the referral has not come from the young person.

- Young people may have reasons for maintaining a particular behaviour (e.g. peer status, avoiding learning situations) which may make a behavioural intervention (e.g. being on contract) ineffective.

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Evidence base for efficacy of MI intervention

- Within educational settings, research with individuals generally limited to case studies (McNamara, 2001; Atkinson & Woods 2003; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009)


- Randomised control trial studies detailing the benefits of MI in promoting academic achievement (Strait et al, 2012; Strait, Terry, McQuillin & Smith, 2014)

- Interest in the use of MI in programme implementation (Lee, Frey, Herman & Reinke, 2014)

- Within clinical settings, extensive empirical research documenting success with individuals engaging in addictive behaviour (e.g. Burke et al, 2003; Arkowitz et al, 2008, Miller & Rose, 2013)

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The Spirit of MI
Miller and Rollnick (2002)

• Collaboration: ‘That the method of motivational interviewing involves exploration more than exhortation, and support rather than persuasion or argument.’ (Miller and Rollnick, 2002).

• Evocation: That MI is not about imparting information, but finding things within the person and drawing them out. It requires finding intrinsic motivation for change from within the person and evoking it.

• Autonomy: Any responsibility for change is left with the client, no matter what the views of professionals. It is the client rather than the counsellor that should ultimately present arguments for change.

Cathy Atkinson 2011
Principles of MI
Miller and Rollnick (2002)

• Expressing empathy
  It is important that adults working with young people seek to understand their feelings in a non-judgemental manner.

• Developing discrepancy
  MI aims to help the young person develop a discrepancy between the present state of affairs and how they might like things to be.

• Rolling with resistance
  Miller and Rollnick (2002) suggest that resistance can be reframed to create momentum for change.

• Supporting self-efficacy
  A young person can be encouraged by the success of others, or by their own previous achievements in changing their behaviour.

Cathy Atkinson 2014
The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) or Model of Stages of Change (adapted from McNamara, 1998; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1998)

1. **PRECONTEMPLATIVE**
   - Pupil sees no problem but others disapprove

2. **CONTEMPLATIVE**
   - Weighing up the pros and cons of changing

3. **PREPARATION**
   - Getting ready for change

4. **ACTIVE CHANGE**
   - Putting the decision into practice

5. **MAINTENANCE**
   - Actively maintaining change

6. **RELAPSE**
   - Return to previous behaviour

Increasing knowledge and concern
Increasing self-efficacy and internal attribution

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MI and the TTM

• MI and TTM are not the same (Miller & Rollnick, 2009)

• MI and TTM are often seen as synonymous in educational settings (Atkinson & Amesu, 2007; Atkinson, 2014)

• Atkinson (2014) suggests using the TTM can be useful in training; identifying appropriate intervention strategies; making MI accessible to young people and in using MI alongside other intervention strategies

Cathy Atkinson 2014
MI with a disaffected primary-aged child (Cryer & Atkinson, 2015)

• Reports using MI intervention with a 10 year old boy, Neil

• Presenting concerns – lack of motivation and participation; unhappy presentation

• Four, weekly sessions of MI, delivered by the first author, using *Facilitating Change 2: Using the Menu of Strategies*

• Adaptations made to accommodate younger child (use of coloured pens; role play)
Developing the Facilitating Change 2 intervention

• Developed for non-specialists working with children and young people
• Based on the principles and spirit of MI, but practically based
• Uses the framework of the ‘Menu of Strategies’ developed as a brief MI intervention (Rollnick, Heather & Bell, 1992)
• Refers to the TTM
Menu of Strategies
(Rollnick, Heather and Bell, 1992)

1. Opening Discussion
2. A typical day/session
3. The good things and the less good things
4. Providing information
5. The future and the present
6. Exploring concerns
7. Helping with decision making
## Example session and adaptations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session One</td>
<td>Words that describe me</td>
<td>Allows child to begin to consider that different individuals have different skills and assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My Skills Profile</td>
<td>Aimed at eliciting individual’s strengths and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening discussion</td>
<td>Uses a worksheet <strong>and coloured felt tip pens</strong>. Helps child to develop an understanding of the different aspects of his life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example activity
Opening discussion – skills profile

Name

Activity sheet 1a (i)

Words that describe me

From the list below, circle the 10 words or phrases that describe you best

- Writer
- Caring
- Environmentally friendly
- Sense of rhythm
- Artistic
- Good with words
- Adventurous
- Aware of my feelings
- Outdoors Person
- Planner
- Musical
- Good with my hands
- Learn by trying things out
- Good sense of direction
- In Control
- Friendly
- Good at explaining
- Team player

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Analysis and findings

• Session transcription and documentation
• Teacher interviews
• Pupil interviews
• Researcher diary
• Integrity of MI considered through a self-assessment form
Findings

• Emergent themes relating to adaptation of the materials, MI as an intervention and MI outcomes
• Tangible positive outcomes for Neil (changes in Neil’s presentation and observable behaviours; award weekly school award for effort; able to start activities without prompting)
• Suggested MI may be appropriate for use with primary-aged children
• Intervention reflected spirit and principles of MI
Engagement with activities

- Enjoyed ‘self concept’ activities
- Individual attention as an important facilitator
- Enjoyed practical elements
- Need for clarification
- Pupil adaptations
- Freedom when younger/increased responsibility now

Life changes

Future aspirations
Home Circumstances

- Positive family network
- Parental divorce
- Hobbies and friends

School is positive
- Praise and rewards
- Enjoyed lessons

School is negative
- Boredom
- Pressure
Increased pupil autonomy

Behaviour/motivation change

Increased self-efficacy

Increased teacher awareness/behaviour change

Reaching potential now
Supporting pupil disaffection (Snape & Atkinson, 2015)

• One-hour training in MI principles and spirit, and FC2 intervention offered to paraprofessionals in one secondary school

• Roles: pupil inclusion manager, assistant special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), attendance officer and teaching assistants (TAs) specialising in autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and social, emotional and behavioral difficulties (SEBD).

• Five different paraprofessionals worked with six different pupils.

• Staff selected the pupils
Data collection

- Pre and post intervention measures of motivation taken using the Pupils’ Feelings about School and School Work (PFSSW) questionnaire (Entwistle & Kozéki, 1985)
- Questionnaire gives affective, cognitive and moral measures of motivation
- It also considers to what extent pupils feel ‘pressure and excessive demands from adults’
- Staff focus group
Findings

• Benefits of MI (*enjoyment and engagement; thinking about their behaviour; behavioural change; focus on the future; pupil-teacher interaction; session resources*) reported by staff focus group

• However, no evidence of change on student self-report motivational measures

• Facilitators and barriers to implementation (*Training, ease of delivery, preparation time, room availability, cancelled sessions, session length, missed lessons, regression, pupil participation*).
Implications

• Training
• Previous experience
• MI adherent?
• Selection of pupils
• Implementation issues
• Use of motivational measures
Next steps

- Looking to ‘scale up’ case based research
- Research looking at young people’s views of MI
- Research looking at how educational psychologists use the intervention in casework
- Usefulness of MI as an intervention for reading engagement and motivation
To find out more

- Email cathy.atkinson@manchester.ac.uk
- Website www.facilitatingchange.org.uk