



ALASDAIR CANT & ASSOCIATES

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

*'You lot don't care! You're going to take our kids away and you get a bonus for that'
'Why aren't you going to the neighbours down the road, they're much worse than us!'
'What do you know? Do you have kids of your own?'*

Are these kinds of 'heart-sink' phrases familiar? Do you or your staff frequently find themselves on the defensive as practitioners or as managers? In an environment of diminishing resources and increasing demand on services, we need a fresh and imaginative approach.

Motivational Interviewing is a framework of intervention, brought together in the 1990s by William Miller and Stephen Rollnick. It is an approach that is designed to work with those most resistant to change or stuck in entrenched behaviours. The premise of Motivational Interviewing is that motivation is not a 'fixed state' that a person does, or does not have. Rather, motivation ebbs and flows depending on many factors such as circumstances, mood and so forth. The skilled practitioner (or manager) will harness whatever very little motivation there might be, and help it move in the right direction. The Motivational Interviewing approach borrows in from other sources such as Carl Rogers' person-centred counselling; Socratic thinking and Prochaska & DiClemente's Cycle of Behaviour change.

The key principles are:

- Engagement *with* the client, rather than doing something *to* them – i.e. change cannot be forced or pushed on to someone. It has to be internal for the client to be meaningful and long term.
- Rolling with resistance (NB this is not rolling over or being passive)
- Express empathy
- Avoid conflict
- Developing discrepancy in client's thinking
- Support self-responsibility

Clients are often stuck or ambivalent about making changes for themselves. Practitioners can easily collude with this 'stuckness', or out of frustration try to push people to action, which only increases resistance. Motivational Interviewing helps to make the practitioner aware of these tendencies, and give them options to work more powerfully in ways that create more possibility of change for their clients.

Alasdair Cant & Associates is delighted to be working with West Berkshire Council to deliver MI training days with follow up 'MI in Action' workshops in the coming months starting with the launch day on 4th October 2017. This will be two half-day workshops to give a taster session into Motivational Interviewing, and its potential power to engage with people meaningfully, rather than do something to them. There will be opportunities for demonstration, discussion, and questions, conducted in ways that model the principles of a motivational skills approach. We will explore together how we can all nurture even the smallest steps of progress, with the emphasis on encouragement and trying to bring out the best in others as well as ourselves.

The Cycle of Change

