




**Use of
Motivational
Interviewing with
Trauma Exposed
Populations**

Debra Kaysen, PhD
Professor, Stanford University

Denise Walker, PhD
Professor, University of Washington



1



Overview

Core tenets of Motivational Interviewing (MI)

Use of MI during the acute phase following trauma exposure

MI to address substance use (briefly)

2

Journal - what are you hearing?

?

What do you hear people want to have changed?

?

What symptoms do they say are interfering with their lives, goals, functioning? In what ways?

The diagram illustrates a timeline from April to September. A lightning bolt icon is positioned above the April calendar. A box above the May and June calendars asks, "...During the acute phase after trauma exposure?". Another box above the August and September calendars asks, "...Once PTSD has become chronic?".

3

Following traumatic events, like war, the goals and approach vary depending on time since trauma.

First 24-72 hours

Safety/stabilization

- Initial crisis
- Safety and stabilization
- Psychological first aid
- Non-mental health intervention
- Typically 1-2 sessions

Post-Trauma

Recovery

- Chronic mental health symptoms
- Trauma focused therapies (exposure or cognitive restructuring – e.g. PE or CPT)
- 5-15 sessions
- Specialty mental health

Days to weeks post-trauma


Building resilience


- Natural recovery phase
- Secondary prevention
- Skills based (social support, coping efficacy, behavioral activation, managing reactions)
- 1-6 sessions

4


Skills for Psychological Recovery

- Evidence-informed intervention to identify needs and teach coping skills to address those needs
- Generally delivered in 3-5 sessions
- SPR is not a mental health “treatment”
- SPR teaches skills that emphasize helping victims and survivors regain a sense of control and competence

 1. Information Gathering

 2. Problem Solving Skills

 3. Positive Activity Scheduling

 4. Managing Reactions

 5. Helpful Thinking

 6. Healthy Connections

5

Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) concepts are highly compatible with an MI approach.



Not sequential



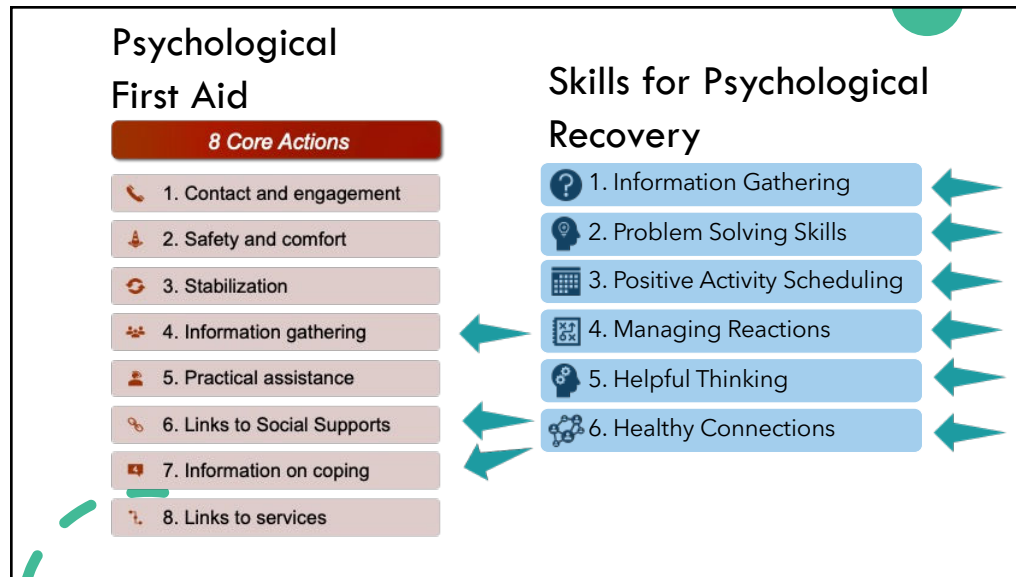
Flexible



Based on the person's specific needs and concerns

6


6



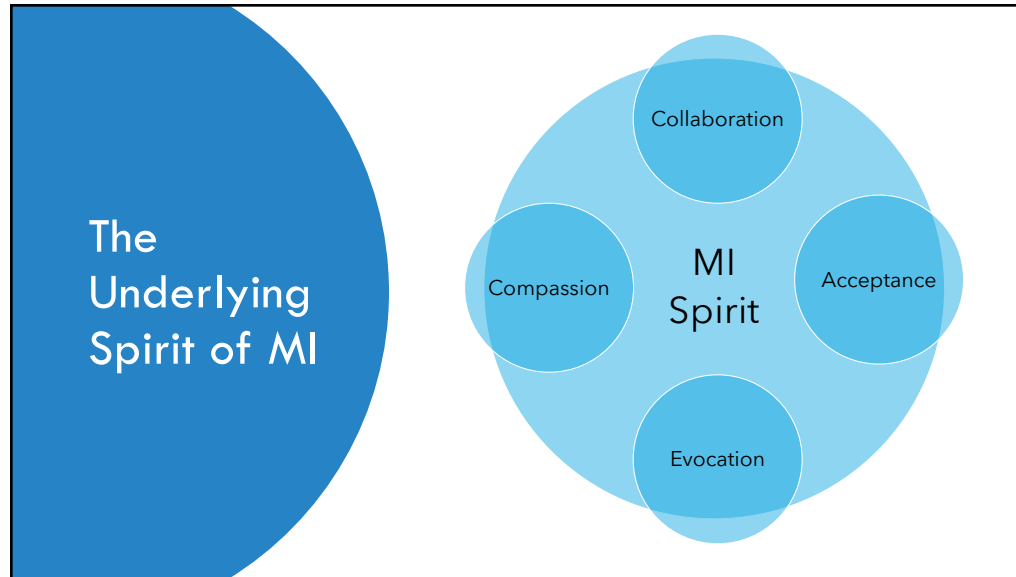
7

Motivational Interviewing in a Nutshell

- MI is a way of communicating that enhances motivation to change.
- People tend to be more motivated by what they hear themselves say.
- MI is interested in hearing the client voice their own personal reasons for change.



8



9

Partnership

Both the client and the counselor bring expertise to the interaction

A slide titled "Partnership" featuring a photograph of a couple dancing in a ballroom. The woman is wearing a white, flowing dress, and the man is in a black tuxedo. They are in a dynamic dance pose. To the right of the photo, the text reads: "Both the client and the counselor bring expertise to the interaction".

10



In MI, we don't assume we have all the answers.

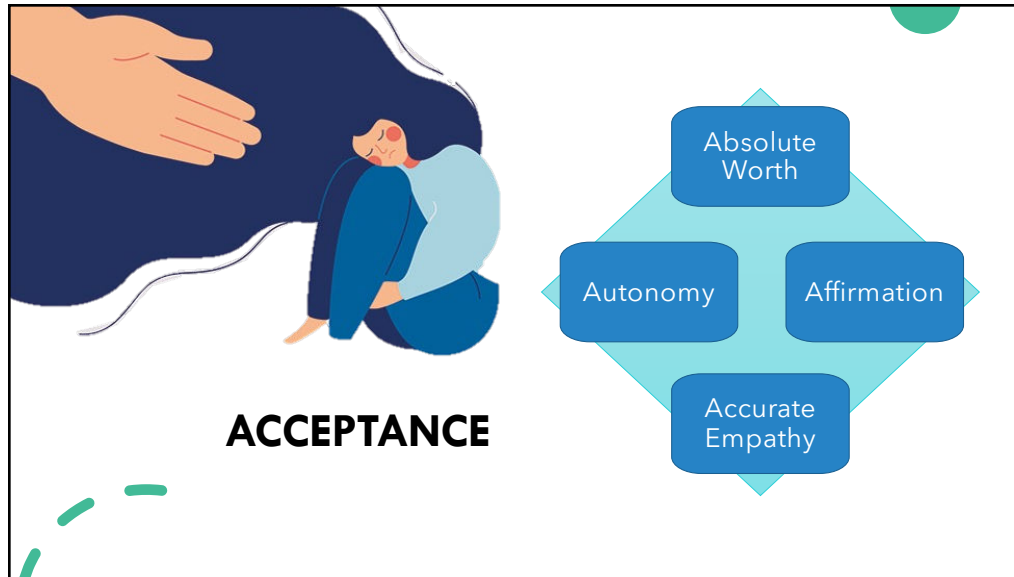
11

EVOCATION

"You have what you need, and together we will find it."



12



ACCEPTANCE

Absolute Worth

Autonomy

Affirmation

Accurate Empathy

13

COMPASSION

"To be compassionate is to actively promote the other's welfare, to give priority to the other's needs."

Why is compassion an essential element of the spirit and practice of MI?



14

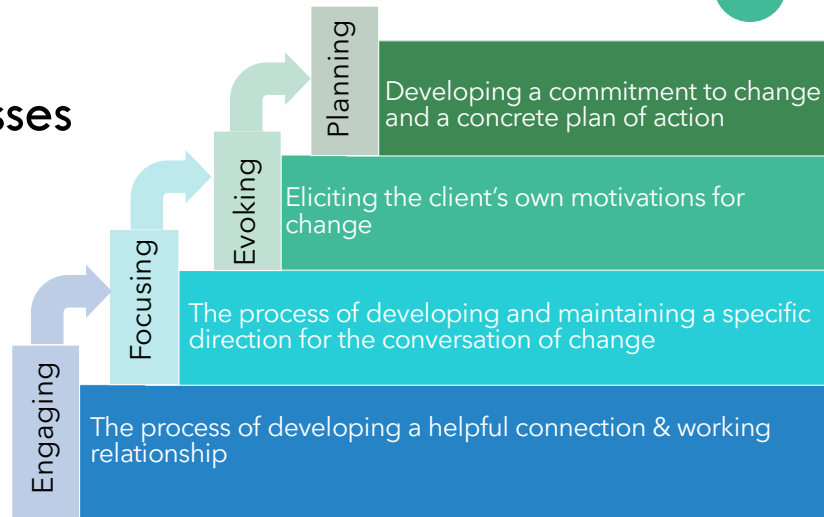
MI Spirit

- Thinking about the “spirit” of MI - Collaboration, Evocation, Compassion, and Acceptance, identify one or two things you are already doing in your work.
- How do you demonstrate collaboration, evocation, compassion or acceptance to your clients?

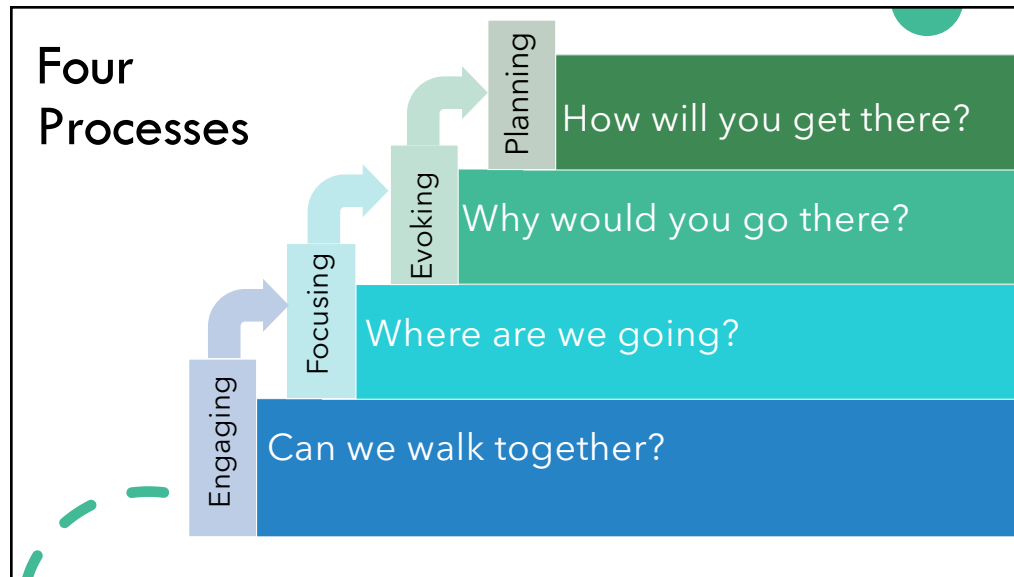


15

Four Processes



16



17

Fundamental MI Skills - OARS

The image shows a row of seven wooden oars. The first six are plain wood, while the seventh on the right is painted blue and features colorful geometric patterns on its blade.

Open-Ended Questions
Affirm
Reflection
Summary

18

Open Ended Questions

- Questions that can't be answered with yes/no, or one word
- Ask for elaboration
- Invite conversation on a particular topic
- Explore - values, behaviors, consequences, ideals, successes, goals, beliefs, experiences, feelings

"Tell me more"

"Tell me about how the traumatic event changed your relationships."



57th Annual Convention Seattle November 16-19, 2023

19

Converting Closed Questions

"Have you been in treatment before?"

"Which traumatic event was the worst?"

"Do you wish you had done something differently?"

"Do you drink or use drugs?"

"Did you lose anyone in the attacks?"

20

AFFIRM

Seeking every opportunity to highlight the person's strengths, positive qualities, and actions

- Past successes
- Struggles and desires
- Current or past efforts to improve things
- The humanity, character, spirit of the client



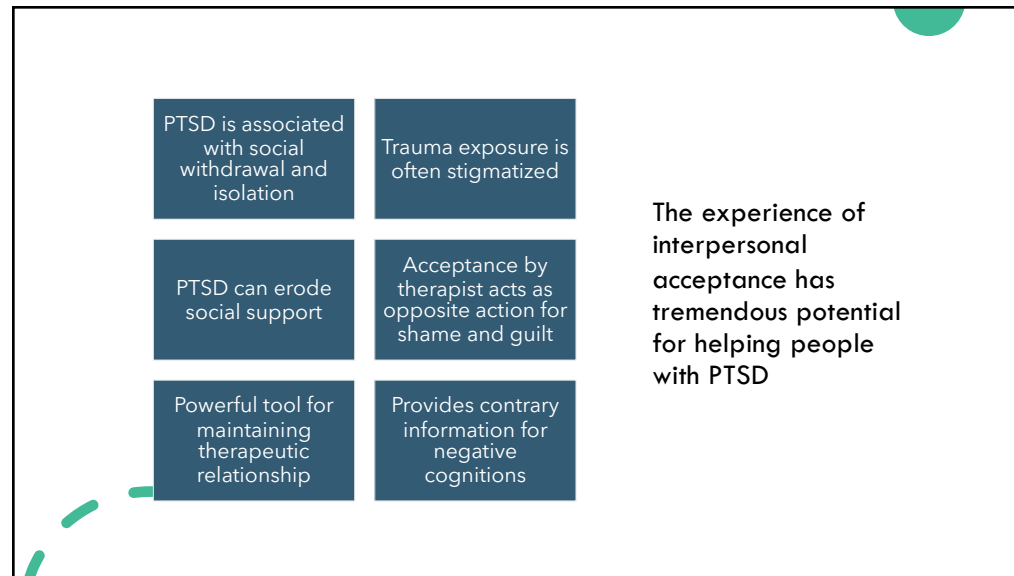
21

Affirmations

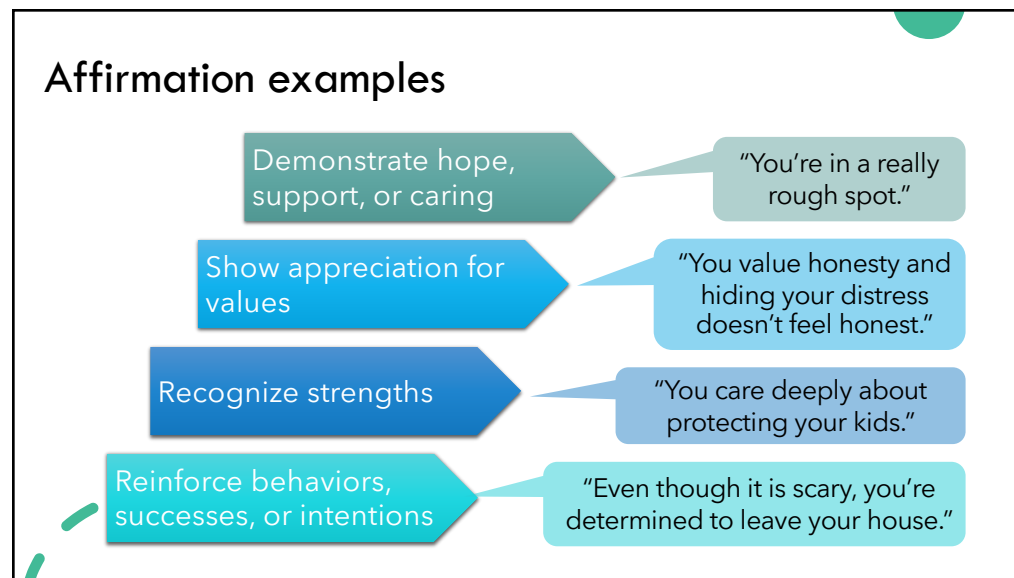
- Special form of reflection that emphasizes strengths
- Builds self-efficacy, orients people to their resources
- Must be **personal** and **genuine**
- Acknowledge client's efforts
- Appreciation of client's attributes, effort, perseverance, showing up



22



23



25

Journal

Think of a time when you were recognized for something you did or just the way you are - and it was unexpected.

What did the person say and how did it make you feel?



26

Reflective Listening: Foundational Skill

- Statements, not questions
- Intent is to accurately understand
- Interest in what the client has to say
- Makes a guess at what you think the person means
- Can amplify meaning or feeling
- Continuing the paragraph - can make a guess as to what you think the client would say next.


27



28

Levels of Reflection

Simple	{	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat or restates • Add little or nothing to what has already been said
Complex	{	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds some meaning or emphasis to what a person has said • Guesses at the unspoken



29

"I haven't been sleeping lately. I keep trying things other than smoking to help myself sleep, but nothing seems to work except smoking."

Marijuana helps your sleep.

SIMPLE

You're working hard to solve this problem. You'd like to be able to sleep better and feel more like yourself without smoking. You're a little worried that might not be possible.

COMPLEX

Marijuana is the **ONLY** way for you to fall asleep.

AMPLIFIED

Using marijuana feels like it helps your sleep and at the same time, you wish there was something else that worked.

DOUBLE-SIDED

30

Process: Focusing

Focusing is seeking a direction around a change goal.

You need a destination when you put your OARS in the water to steer.

31

Three Scenarios

(These occur on a spectrum)

Which are you seeing most right now?

Type the number in the chat

- 1 The person comes in with a goal.
- 2 The person has a number of things they could work on.
- 3 The person has no clear direction - they are stressed, but don't know where to start or what to focus on.

32

FOCUSING is a helpful way to do information gathering and to provide practical assistance.



During acute crisis individuals may be overwhelmed emotionally and with immediate needs.

Focusing can help with clarifying those priorities.

33

Questions for Exploring Values and Goals

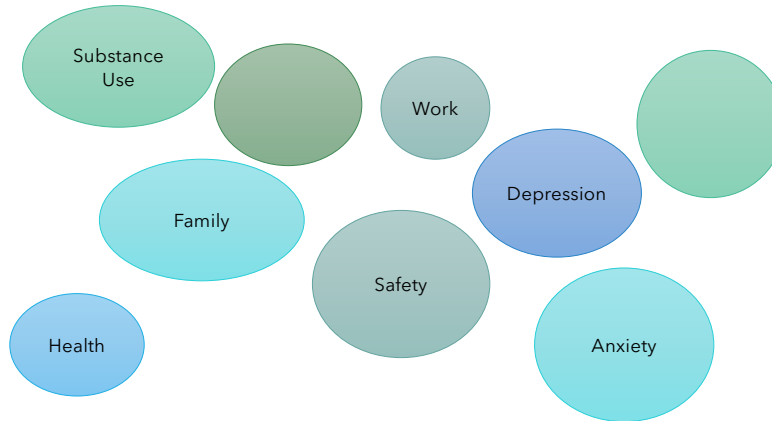
"What are some of the things you wish to change over the next week/month?"

"When you think of the 2 or 3 most important things to you right now, what are they?"

If we could change one thing for you right now, what would that be?

34

Focusing Tool: Agenda Mapping



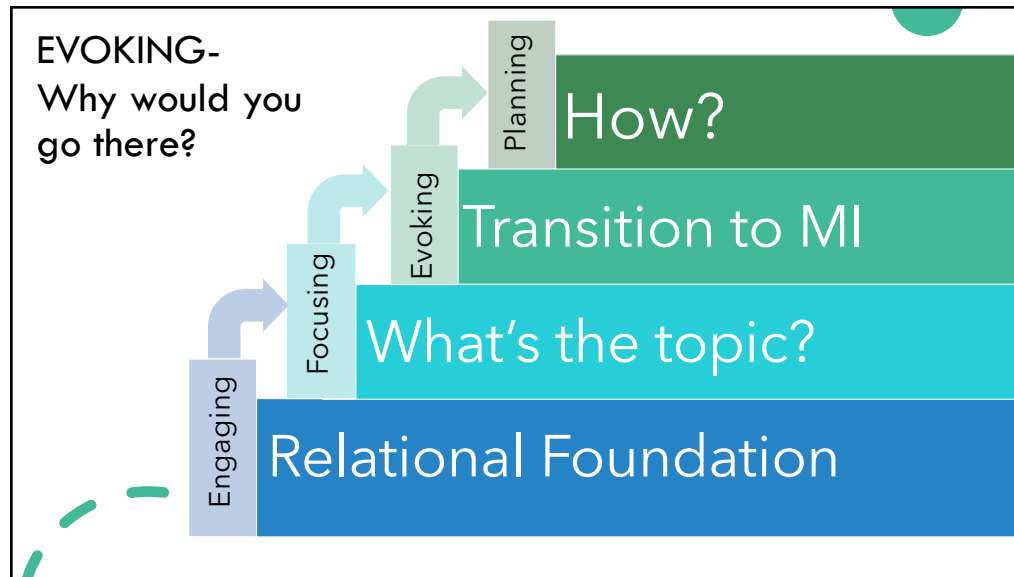
35



**Focusing Tool:
Agenda
Mapping**

- What might you like to talk about?
- If you were to select the topic for us to talk about, what would you pick?
- What I'm hearing for possible areas for us to focus on are _____, _____, and _____. You might have some other things you'd like to work on. (I might have some ideas as well). Of all of those, what do you think would be most helpful for us to talk about right now?

36



37

Psychological First Aid (PFA) / Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)

CORE ACTIONS | Information Gathering
Practical Assistance

Goals:

- 1) Identify immediate needs & concerns, gather information, & prioritize
- 2) Clarify needs & develop action plan

Pro-Tips

- PFA **is not** one-size fits all
- Use active listening skills
- Prioritization should be collaborative
- Know what resources are available and/or know how to find out

38

Identify existing coping strategies and potential new coping strategies

Start with previously used coping strategies

- What are ways you've coped in the past with difficult situations?
- How are those working now?
- Starting with prior coping enhances self-efficacy

May need help troubleshooting how to implement either old or new coping strategies in current context

If needed, identify new adaptive coping actions

- What are your ideas for things you can do here?
- What isn't working with your old coping skills?

39

Change-Talk



- Specific to MI
- Any statement a client makes in favor of change
- Opposite is “sustain talk” – statements made in favor of staying the same
- Expresses advantages for change, optimism for change, disadvantages of staying the same
- Desire, ability, reasons or need for change
- Willingness or intention to change
- Specific to the change goal

40

Change-Talk in the Context of Trauma

How are symptoms getting in the way of...

- functioning,
- life goals
- immediate goals?

Change talk for trauma can be centered on interest or desire for...

- learning adaptive coping skills
- telling your story
- reducing avoidance behaviors or
- treatment



41

Change Talk

You are looking for change talk throughout any MI interaction.

If I could find a program that fits I know I could do it.

I need to address how scared I am all the time because it's frightening my kids.

I want to be less irritable.

I'm not ready for treatment but I could start leaving my house again.

I need to find a way to sleep better. I'm exhausted.

42

Evoking Strategies for Change Talk

Asking Open-ended Questions

Evocative Questions

Using The Importance Ruler

Using the Confidence Ruler

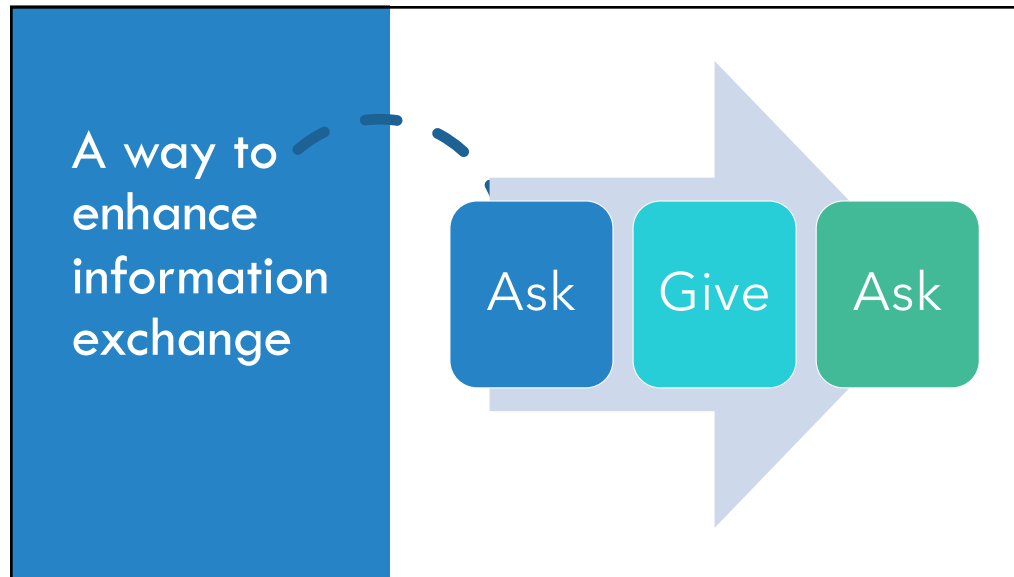
Elaborating

Querying Extremes

Looking Back/ Looking Forward

Exploring Goals and Values

43



44

Asking Permission

- Get permission prior to providing information
- Obtaining permission first can also be useful when a client asks for information
- Use autonomy-support language
 - Useful for sharing information about common responses to trauma, adaptive coping, services available....
 - Example: "What you do with this information is up to you..."

45

Informing the MI way




- Acknowledge that the client is the expert on their own life
- Don't overload them with information
- Be strategic - Plan what you will offer
- Provide opportunity for the client to process and respond to the information
- Limit what you offer and tailor it to your client
- Encourage the client to use the information as it suits them.

46

Psychological First Aid (PFA) / Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)

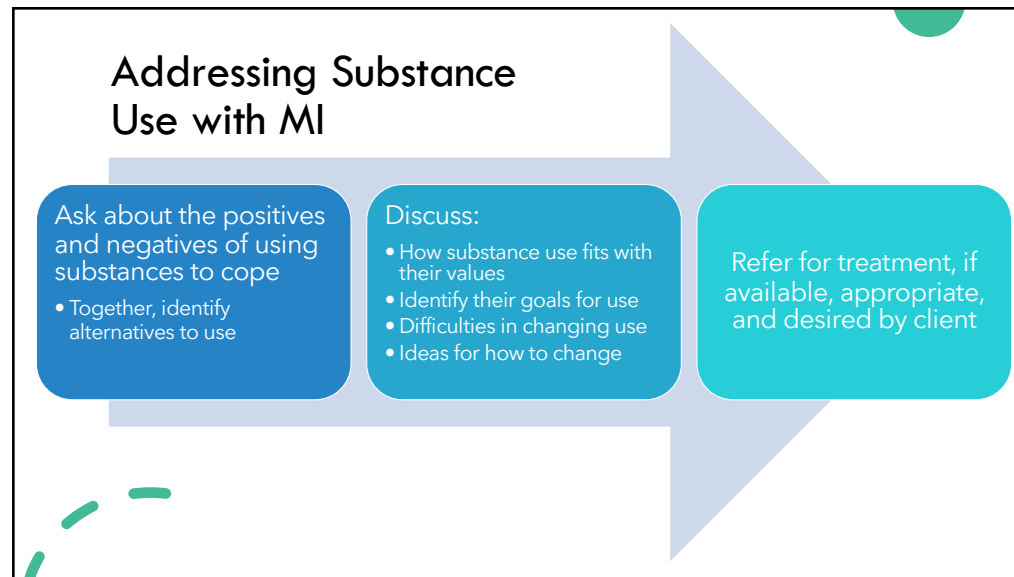
CORE ACTION | Links to Social Support

Goal:
Link to Social Supports



- Help establish brief or ongoing contacts with primary support persons and other sources of support
- Family
- Friends
- Community

47



48

Putting it all together

- Deborah has been deeply affected by the bombing. She has lost friends in the attacks and is having trouble sleeping. She feels anxious and alert all the time. She worries constantly about her family getting hurt. She has noticed she has increased her drinking to “settle her nerves”.
- She has presented for care because she is concerned about how her worrying is affecting her kids. She has noticed they are increasing trying to caretake for her.

49

Rulers: A tool for identifying motivation to change.



Importance: "On a scale from 0-10, how important is it to make this change?"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all important									Extremely Important

Confidence: "On a scale of 0-10, how confident are you that you could make this change if you decided to?"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all important									Extremely Important

50

Rulers: Explore Further

Confidence - possible follow-up questions:



"What is there about you (strengths, abilities, talents) that would help you do this?"

"How might you go about it in order to succeed?"

"What have you done successfully in the past that was like this in some way?"

51



These are each common challenges. Pick 1 to practice eliciting change talk

"So many other people have it worse than me. I don't deserve care."

"I'm scared the symptoms will get worse."

"I am just too busy to focus on my mental health right now."

"I don't want to talk about the rape. I need to talk about how my kids are doing."

52

Journal

- What was valuable that you took away from our time today?
- How are you feeling about your ability to use MI skills in your practice?
- What skill or concept will you try out with a client this week?



53

