

The 4 Main Motivational Interviewing Strategies

(Based on Miller & Rollnick, 2002)

1. **Express empathy & acceptance:** Conveyed both **non-verbally**, through eye contact, body position, & facial expression, and **verbally**, through reflections.
 - a) *“So you’re pretty angry about having to be here.”*
 - b) *“Sounds like you’re sort of worried about that.”*
 - c) *“You light up when you talk about your kids. I hear how important they are to you.”*
2. **Develop discrepancy & elicit change talk:** Help participants describe the difference between how they take care of their lives now and how they’d rather see themselves taking care of their lives. Encourage them to describe the benefits of positive change and/or dissatisfactions with the status quo.
 - a) *“You’re saying that some things in your life might be better if you stopped selling & using drugs. Say some more about that.”*
 - b) *“You want things to be different when you get out of here. How so?”*
3. **Roll with resistance:** Don’t get rattled when the participant says something against the possibility of change. If the participant starts to argue with you or becomes defensive, this is a cue to modify your approach. You don’t need to pressure them to change. Try the following responses instead:
 - **Reflective Comments:** Simply state your understanding of their reasons for resistance.
- *“You’re saying you don’t think getting a decent paid job is ever going to be an option for someone with a criminal record.”*
 - **Double-Sided Reflections:** Make a comment that includes both sides of the participant’s motivation- wanting positive change, yet having concerns about such change.
- *“So you’d like to quit getting high, but you’re worried that you’ll miss it too much.”*
 - **Emphasize Personal Choice:** State directly that it’s their choice.
- *“You’re telling me that you have no interest in trying anything new. That’s completely up to you. I hope attending START NOW will still be helpful to you in some way.”*
4. **Support self efficacy:** Reinforce any expression of willingness to hear information from you, to acknowledge the problem(s), and/or to take steps toward change. Make the connection between previous successful change and the potential to change the current problem.
 - a) *“I respect your honesty about your reading problem. I know it may not be easy to talk about.”*
 - b) *“You used to get into a lot of fights, and that was causing problems for you. You’re telling us that you made up your mind to change that, and you were able to do it. It sounds like you’d probably be successful with other positive changes you decide to make.”*