

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network meeting minutes--2/19/08

Attendance: Chris Huffine (Allies in Change), Paul Lee (Men's Resource Center), Stacey Womack (ARMS), Regina Rosann (ARMS), Margaret Braun (Portland State University), Shaun Konradson (ARMS), Johnnie Burt (ARMS), Lorena Connelly (Los nines cuentan), Paula Manley (Manley Interventions), Andrea Poole (Manley Interventions), Jennifer Warren (Men's Resource Center/Women's Counseling Center), Jacquie Pancoast (ChangePoint), Michael Davis (ChangePoint), Sarah McDowell (Raphael House), Brad Peterson (A New Life Christian Counseling)

Minutes by Margaret Braun and Paula Manley, edited by Chris Huffine

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Michael Davis is here to talk about motivational interviewing (MI). It is a hot topic- being pushed by the call for evidence based practice (EBP).

MI is a client-centered, yet directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence. Counselors express empathy, affirms the clients' autonomy, etc.

Research on MI

Michael was involved in some research with MI at ChangePoint a few years ago. MI is useful for engaging and retaining people in treatment- the effects are significant and enduring. MI has been shown to improve substance abuse treatment outcomes. Many counselors say they are doing MI, but research indicates that many who say they are doing it are actually not doing MI. The purpose of this research was to see if people who claim they are doing MI really are, and what impact MI has on client retention and treatment outcomes. Individuals were randomly assigned to MI or non-MI treatment groups. 5 community treatment programs were involved, 3 from Oregon. Clients who received MI completed more sessions in 4 weeks than people in standard intake processes. Not sure if it was statistically significant, however. Clients who received MI did not show better retention in the 84-day follow up. For alcohol users, there was a more pronounced difference in the number of sessions attended over the 4 week period. MI clients attended more sessions than non-MI clients.

To achieve these effects, counselors and supervisors should be trained in MI, there should be ongoing supervision of MI, groups should be videotaped and critiqued, rate counseling sessions on a regular basis, using MI style in supervision (this has not been tested, but it has been suggested that this would help).

Using MI with Batterers

www.motivationalinterviewing.org is a good resource.

Changepoint makes great attempts to always use EBP. MI is really the culture of Changepoint. They blend MI with CBT and skill training in group therapy. DV program uses the Duluth Model and MI. Counselors attend a special MI skill building supervision groups 3-4 times per month.

Counselors at Changepoint using MI want the conflict to be internal, within the batterer, rather than displace the conflict elsewhere. Affirming clients' autonomy helps them know that they have the ability to change. Counseling is not coercive, but rather it is a partnership that honors the client and sets up an environment that is conducive to change. The resources for change are presumed to reside within the client, and the focus is on the client's strengths, goals, and values.

Alignment with the client is key- but this does not mean collusion. Counselors don't have to agree with everything they say or do, but rather align with them to focus on what their immediate needs and concerns are (e.g., taking care of legal problems). Developing discrepancy is also key. At Changepoint, they have the "precontemplation" group for 10 weeks where they help clients figure out that they want and need to be at the program. Through this education the clients begin to move into "contemplation."

Michael feels that this method works well for compliance, but also works for real, internal behavior change. As the clients have spent more time in the program, the clients begin to develop discrepancy, meaning they begin to see how their actions (DV) did not match up with what they wanted. E.g., a client who says "I put my hands on her throat" might eventually see that what he really wanted was for her to listen to him, and the facilitator can point out that putting hands on her throat doesn't get her to listen to him. It doesn't meet what he needs.

Jacque Pancoast stated that client's movement from precontemplation to contemplation depends upon the group dynamic, and the type of group they are in during their first 10 weeks. Men from open-ended groups (instead of the 10 week education group) in precontemplation take longer to move to contemplation.

Clients at Changepoint work together to talk about their criminal justice charges and whether or not their punishment fits their crime. Many will say that it does meet the crime, helping them feel that they can say anything they need to in the group—this helps foster a feeling of alignment with the group.

Groups are characterized by open-ended questions, affirming environment, client focused methods, reflective listening. Affirmations demonstrate a positive view of the client, encourage attendance, build self-efficacy and optimism, and support their strengths. It is important not to be a cheerleader here- encourage the client to build his own energy around how well he is doing. How do you navigate doing the encouragement and/or support without supporting what the batterer is still doing? Try to have him gauge his own level of abuse (Michael gave the example of the "ruler" or a rating system on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being completely non-abusive) to see how much farther the person can go to be less abusive.

With MI, be very careful about what your own agenda is. Our agendas are typically around increasing women's safety, but if we push the client too quickly to change we may lose the positive work he has already done.

Reflective listening is not agreeing with the client, but stating back your understanding to the client. This is an area that requires some skill- that is why supervision and training is so important.

Michael and Jacquie led a demonstration of a 1st session with a batterer. "The beginning of an MI sandwich."

Group reaction to the demonstration:

This kind of session is somewhat different to what others have experienced. Time concerns are important- the need to move forward with the process instead of spending time focusing on the client's resistance to the treatment (as was demonstrated).

Jacquie noted that her intake session with a client is about 2 hours. This includes A/D, DV assessments, orientation, etc. It is a little more costly than other programs' intakes. Doing MI in an agency is costly. Changepoint allows more time for an intake than many of the other agencies. Time taken on the front end means that there will be less time taken during the first group. The findings from the study show that this first session really makes a difference.

Chris notes the possibility of doing these types of MI elements in a more limited form during a more business-like intake meeting. He has noticed that clients will respond to this as well and still come out of an intake as less resistant.

Other group members noted the spirit or style of MI that was present in the demonstration. This spirit or style is key- it is the first question on the MI fidelity tool that Michael distributed.

MI Roadmap maps out what tools of MI are used during certain stages of change.

Pros and Cons are another tool... "What are the good things about...?" and "What are the bad things about?" E.g., what are the good things about using profanity? What are the bad things about it? What would be the loss if you decided to change this behavior? In Changepoint's beginner group clients are encouraged to write down the pros and cons of substance abuse on the board. This allows clients to see the information and then make the decision to change on their own. The control log does some of the same thing.

The Ruler- "How important is it to you to make this change?" and "How confident are you that you can make this change?" Michael asked us all to note the number on a scale from 1-10 that represented how important it was to you to learn more about MI. A second question asked was how confident are you that you can make the change to learn more about MI?

“When we encounter resistance (power struggle) it is the counselor’s problem.” Power struggles are relational that require more than just the client. Counselors need to do reflections and change strategies. Decrease arguing, challenging, disagreeing, warning of negative consequences, don’t set a plan for the client without negotiating. Don’t seek to persuade with evidence or logic- don’t be the expert, let him be the expert. Don’t confront the client with authority or use sarcasm. To deal with resistance employ simple reflection, emphasize the client’s personal control to be there or not, validation of feelings, support self-efficacy.

Fidelity tools for MI: training, continued training happens in the area (Kathy Tomlin with Kaiser conducts trainings and has a manual); taping sessions and critiquing them (you need an MI style of supervision for this; you need a release form signed by the client or whole group for these taping sessions); MI self-assessment report (Michael passed this out to the group).

Michael’s concerns are that people are saying they are using MI who are not well trained or practiced. Michael would like to conduct a training on MI for BI providers. He thinks the spirit of MI is here, but practice is needed. The group expressed interest in having a training on MI.

“Is this a one size fits all approach for men in BIPs?” Michael: Not a one size fits all, but it is the most effective with batterers and A/D folks at ChangePoint in terms of retention and internalization and change. There are people where CBT will work better, and that is happening with the Duluth Model. People with mental health issues probably need to go to more specific programs.

www.prochange.com is a group that has developed a computer-based MI training that is showing some good results with batterer intervention. You can do a test run on your computer.

Anecdotally, MI is clearly more effective than being hard-assed and in your face. Try what you can and see what happens. If you are a good counselor, Michael doesn’t think you are going to do any damage by using MI.