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Irvin Yalom önderliğinde organize edilen ve dünyaca ünlü terapistlerin ve terapi kuramı kurucularının, ekollerin en önemli temsilcilerinin psikoterapi seanslarını video olarak izlemek ve seans hakkındaki yorumlarını dinlemek ve bu kursları (American Psychological Association (APA) başta olmak üzere Social Workers (ASWB) New York State Social Workers (NYSED BSW) New York State Mental Health Practitioners (NYSED MHP) Certified Counselors (NBCC) Addiction Counselors (NAADAC) MFTs and LCSW (CA BBS) California Nurses (BRN) Canadian Counsellors kurumlarından CE (Continuing Education-Sürekli Eğitim) akreditasyonlu sertifikayla belgelendirmek isterseniz veritabanımıza bireysel veya kurumsal olarak erişmek için bizimle iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

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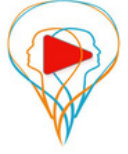


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Instructor's Manual

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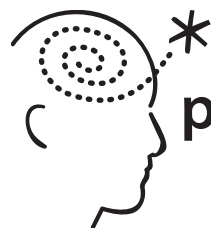
**INCREASING IMPORTANCE
IN MOTIVATIONAL
INTERVIEWING**

with

CATHY COLE, LCSW

Manual by

Ali Miller, MFT



psychotherapy.net

The *Instructor's Manual* accompanies the DVD *Increasing Importance in Motivational Interviewing with Cathy Cole, LCSW* (Institutional/Instructor's Version). Video available at www.psychotherapy.net.

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Miller, Ali, MFT

Instructor's Manual for Increasing Importance in Motivational Interviewing with Cathy Cole, LCSW

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Instructor's Manual for

INCREASING IMPORTANCE IN MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING WITH CATHY COLE, LCSW

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Tips for Making the Best Use of the DVD

1. USE THE TRANSCRIPTS

Make notes in the video **Transcript** for future reference; the next time you show the video you will have them available. Highlight or notate key moments in the video to better facilitate discussion during and after the video.

2. FACILITATE DISCUSSION

Pause the video at different points to elicit viewers' observations and reactions to the concepts presented. The **Discussion Questions** section provides ideas about key points that can stimulate rich discussions and learning.

3. ENCOURAGE SHARING OF OPINIONS

Encourage viewers to voice their opinions; no therapy is perfect! What are viewers' impressions of what works and does not work in the sessions? We learn as much from our mistakes as our successes; it is crucial for students and therapists to develop the ability to effectively critique this work as well as their own.

4. ASSIGN A REACTION PAPER

See suggestions in the **Reaction Paper** section.

5. CONDUCT A ROLE-PLAY

The **Role-Play** section guides you through exercises you can assign to your students in the classroom or training session.

6. SUGGEST READINGS TO ENRICH VIDEO MATERIAL

Assign readings from **Related Websites, Videos and Further Reading** prior to or after viewing.

PERSPECTIVE ON VIDEOS AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE THERAPIST

Psychotherapy portrayed in videos is less *o# -the-cu#* than therapy in practice. Therapists may feel put on the spot to *o# er* a good demonstration, and clients can be self-conscious in front of a camera. Therapists *o" en* move more quickly than they would in everyday practice to demonstrate a particular technique. Despite these factors, therapists and clients on video can engage in a realistic session that conveys a wealth of information not contained in books or therapy transcripts: body language, tone of voice, facial expression, rhythm of the interaction, quality of the alliance—all aspects of the therapeutic relationship that are unique to an interpersonal encounter.

Psychotherapy is an intensely private matter. Unlike the training in other professions, students and practitioners rarely have an opportunity to see their mentors at work. But watching therapy on video is the next best thing.

One more note: *! e* personal style of therapists is *o" en* as important as their techniques and theories. Therapists are usually drawn to approaches that mesh well with their own personalities. *! us*, while we can certainly pick up ideas from master therapists, students and trainees must make the best use of relevant theory, technique and research that *\$ t* their own personal styles and the needs of their clients.

Summary of Motivational Interviewing*

Motivational Interviewing (MI) was developed by William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick, and is defined as a collaborative, person-centered directive counseling method for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about behavior change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's own reasons for change, within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.

The concept of Motivational Interviewing evolved from experiences with problem drinkers and now is applied to a wide range of concerns such as healthcare improvement, high-risk sexual behaviors, diabetes management, and mental health problems.

MI recognizes and accepts the fact that clients who need to make changes in their lives approach counseling at different levels of readiness to change their behavior. If the counseling is mandated, they may never have thought of changing the behavior in question. Some may have thought about it but not taken steps to change it. Others, especially those voluntarily seeking counseling, may be actively trying to change their behavior and may have been doing so unsuccessfully for years.

MI involves collaboration rather than confrontation, evocation rather than education, autonomy rather than authority, and exploration rather than explanation. Effective processes for positive change focus on goals that are small, important to the client, specific, realistic, and oriented in the present and/or future.

SPIRIT OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

While there are as many variations in technique as there are clinical encounters, the spirit of the method, however, is more enduring and can be characterized in a few key points:

1. Motivation to change is elicited from the client, and is not imposed from outside forces.
2. It is the client's task, not the counselor's, to articulate and resolve his or her ambivalence.
3. Direct persuasion is not an effective method for resolving ambivalence.

4. The counseling style is generally quiet and elicits information from the client.

5. The counselor is directive, in that they help the client to examine and resolve ambivalence.

6. Readiness to change is not a trait of the client, but a motivating result of interpersonal interaction.

7. The therapeutic relationship resembles a partnership or companionship.

The style of the therapist using MI is nonjudgmental, nonconfrontational, and nonadversarial. The approach attempts to increase the client's awareness of the potential problems caused, consequences experienced, and risks faced as a result of the behavior in question. Therapists help clients envision a better future, and become increasingly motivated to achieve it. The MI approach seeks to help clients think differently about their behavior and ultimately to consider what might be gained through change. It is critical to meet clients where they are, and to refrain from forcing clients toward change when they have not expressed a desire to do so.

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Four key aspects of the MI approach are:

1) Express empathy:

Empathy involves seeing the world through the client's eyes, thinking about things as the client thinks about them, feeling things as the client feels them, and sharing in the client's experiences.

Expression of empathy is critical to the MI approach. When clients feel that they are understood, they are more able to open up to their own experiences and share those experiences with others. In short, the counselor's accurate understanding of the client's experience facilitates change.

2) Develop discrepancy:

This guides therapists to help clients appreciate the value of change by exploring the discrepancy between how clients want their lives to be versus how they currently are (or between their deeply held values and their day-to-day behavior). MI counselors work to develop this situation through helping clients examine the discrepancies between

their current behavior and future goals. When clients perceive that their current behaviors are not leading toward some important future goal, they become more motivated to make important life changes.

3) Roll with resistance/re# ect discord:

An evolving concept in MI has to do with resistance. Whereas MI used to talk about “rolling with resistance,” which refers to not challenging client resistance, the concept of resistance is being reframed in terms of discord. From this new perspective, discord is a disturbance in the relationship and is the responsibility of the counselor to address, frequently by the use of a re% ection. Discord o" en occurs when a client feels pushed in some way, and o" en stems from the “**righting re# ex**” on the part of the counselor. ! e righting re% ex is the natural inclination most people have to want to make things better, which o" en is characterized by an assumption that we have the answer and know what is right for the person we’re trying to help. ! erefore, discord o" en occurs when clients are lectured to, given unsolicited advice, asked to move toward change before indicating readiness/willingness, blamed, shamed, etc. At times, a person is already in a state of discord before entering the counseling session, because the idea for the encounter was not entirely theirs. ! e person was “pushed” in some way and anticipates that the counselor will continue to push. ! e goal when discord arises is to establish or re-establish a collaborative partnership with the client, remembering the spirit of MI. Re% ecting the client’s experience is a primary way to do this.

4) Support self-e\$ cacy:

! is guides therapists to explicitly embrace client autonomy (even when clients choose to not change) and help clients move toward change successfully and with con\$ dence. As clients are held responsible for choosing and carrying out actions to change in the MI approach, counselors focus their e# orts on helping the clients stay motivated, and supporting clients’ sense of self-e& cacy is one way to do that. One source of hope for clients using the MI approach is that there is no “right way” to change, and if a given plan for change does not work, clients are only limited by their own creativity as to the number of other plans that might be tried.

LISTENING FOR CHANGE TALK

Change talk is defined as statements by the client revealing consideration of, motivation for, or commitment to change. In MI, the therapist listens for these expressions of importance, confidence, and readiness/commitment and seeks to guide the client to elaborate on these expressions of change talk as the pathway to change. Research shows that the more someone talks about change, the more likely they are to change. Different types of change talk can be described using the mnemonic DARN-CATS:

Preparatory Change Talk

Desire (I want to change)
 Ability (I can change)
 Reason (It's important to change)
 Need (I should change)

Implementing Change Talk

Commitment (I will make changes)
 Activation (I am ready, prepared, willing to change)
 Taking Steps (I am taking specific actions to change)

MI INTERVIEWING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

The practice of MI involves the skillful use of certain techniques for bringing to life the “MI spirit,” demonstrating the MI principles, and guiding the process toward eliciting client change talk and commitment for change.

OARS

OARS is a brief way to remember the basic approach used in MI. Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reactions, and Summaries are core strategies used to move the process forward by establishing a therapeutic alliance and eliciting discussion about change.

Open-ended questions are those that are not easily answered with a “yes/no” or short answer containing only a specific, limited piece of information. Open-ended questions invite elaboration and thinking more deeply about an issue. Open-ended questions create forward momentum used to help the client explore the reasons for and possibility of change.

Affirmations are statements that recognize client strengths. They help build rapport and encourage clients to see themselves in a different, more positive light. To be effective, they must be congruent and genuine. Affirmations can help clients feel that change is possible even when previous efforts have been unsuccessful. Affirmations often involve reframing behaviors or concerns as evidence of positive client qualities.

Reflections or reflective listening is perhaps the most crucial skill in MI. It has two primary purposes. First is to bring to life the principle of **Expressing Empathy**. When the counselor utilizes careful listening and reflective responses, the client comes to feel that the counselor understands the issues from their perspective. Beyond this, strategic use of reflective listening is a core intervention toward guiding the client toward change, supporting the goal-directed aspect of MI. In this use of reflections, the therapist guides the client towards resolving ambivalence by a focus on the negative aspects of the status quo and the positives of making change. There are several levels of reflection ranging from simple to more complex. Different types of reflections are skillfully used as clients demonstrate different levels of readiness for change.

Summaries are a special type of reflection where the therapist recaps all or part of a counseling session. Summaries communicate interest and understanding, and call attention to important elements of the discussion. They may be used to shift attention or direction and prepare the client to “move on.” Summaries can highlight both sides of a client’s ambivalence about change and promote the development of discrepancy by strategically selecting what information should be included and what can be minimized or excluded.

When clients do express change talk, it is important to remember to stay in the stance of eliciting from clients how they want to go about changing, where they want to start, what that will look like for them, what barriers there might be, and how they need to work on addressing those barriers. A counselor might provide some information for clients to consider that would help them with their choice, but ultimately the client is going to make the decision about what they’re going to do.

*Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivational_interviewing, <http://www.motivationalinterview.org>, Cathy Cole Training, Inc.’s December 2011 newsletter, and a training lecture by Cathy Cole.

Discussion Questions

Professors, training directors, and facilitators may use some or all of these discussion questions, depending on what aspects of the video are most relevant to the audience.

In the three scenarios of this DVD, all of the clients are lower in importance in considering change. The primary goals are engagement, avoiding convincing the client about making change, developing discrepancy, and fostering an atmosphere that would allow the client to continue exploration about change or make some initial plans.

INTRODUCTION

1. **Don't argue for change:** What reactions do you have to the premise in Motivational Interviewing that the counselor's role is not to argue for change, but to provide clients the opportunity to argue for change if they decide they want to? Are there times when you think this kind of approach would be too passive, such as when someone is engaging in self-destructive behavior? In what circumstances do you think it would be challenging for you to hold yourself back from arguing for change?
2. **Personal experiences:** Do you agree with the premise that if someone doesn't think changing is important, they're unlikely to invest much energy in it? Can you think of times in your professional or personal life when you wanted someone else to change but they didn't want to? What feelings came up for you and how did you handle this? Alternatively, have there been times in your life when someone else wanted you to change a behavior but you didn't think it was important? How was it for you to be pressured by someone else to change? Did their arguments for change increase your desire to change? Why or why not?
3. **Resistance:** If a client does not think it is important to change their behavior, the traditional interpretation of this would be to label it as resistance or denial, but Cole stated that she thinks about it as just where the client is at a given point of time. Are you comfortable letting go of the concepts of resistance and denial, or do you think these are important concepts in looking at the

process of change? Particularly when working with addictions, do you think it is important to confront someone who thinks they don't need to change? Why or why not? How do you think your relationship with your clients would be impacted if you stopped seeing them as being resistant or "in denial"?

SCENARIO ONE: SARAH: USING FEEDBACK

Sarah is a young college student who is required to seek counseling based on an infraction of the college drinking policy. Cole elicits her view of drinking and its impact and provides feedback from self-report measures.

4. Therapeutic alliance: What do you think of the way Cole attended to the therapeutic relationship early on? Is there anything you would have done differently to begin to create a therapeutic alliance? What are some ways you create an environment where clients (particularly mandated clients) feel accepted and respected so that they feel comfortable talking?

5. Reinforcing behavior: What was your reaction when Cole offered amplified reflections? Did you have any concerns that she was reinforcing Sarah's behavior? Do you typically pay attention to how you offer reflections to your clients?

6. Mandated: Sarah states early in the session that she doesn't think anything is really wrong and that she is in counseling because she is required to be there. What do you think of how Cole responded to this? Do you think her reflection of Sarah's position was helpful? Why or why not? How do you tend to respond when clients tell you they don't think they need to be in counseling? How do you approach clients who are mandated to treatment?

7. Questionnaires: What are your thoughts on having clients fill out questionnaires about their risky behaviors? Is this something you do with clients who have drinking or other behavioral problems? What do you think are some of the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires?

8. Reflections: What do you like and dislike about Cole's style of reflecting back what Sarah says? Were there specific reflections

that you thought were particularly helpful or unhelpful in moving the session forward? Were there times when you would have been inclined to offer something other than a reflection?

9. Reinforcing change talk: What are your reactions to the concept of “change talk”? Is this a new idea for you? What did you notice about Cole’s style of reinforcing change talk? What are some examples of moments when this seemed particularly helpful or unhelpful? What are some ways you reinforce change talk with your clients?

10. Chunk, Check, Chunk: What do you think of how Cole provided feedback to Sarah about the information she provided on the questionnaires? Do you think she was successful at coming across as objective and nonjudgmental? Do you like the method of providing some feedback and then checking in with the client’s reaction before giving more feedback?

11. Deep enough?: Were there times in the session when you would have been inclined to focus more on the root of the problem, such as when Sarah talked about not having been invited to the drinking parties in high school? Does this approach go deep enough for you?

12. Autonomy: How successful do you think Cole was in avoiding sounding judgmental, avoiding lecturing the client, and allowing for Sarah’s autonomy while expressing professional concern over her behavior? Why do you think there is so much emphasis in MI on respecting the autonomy of the client? Are there other counseling/therapy approaches that you think do not respect the autonomy of the client enough? Talk about a case you’ve had where it was challenging to honor your client’s autonomy because of your own opinions or concerns for them.

13. Professional opinion: What do you think of how Cole shared her professional opinion that Sarah’s drinking and sexual behavior are “alarming”? Why do you think she waited until the end of the session to share this? Do you think she should have shared it sooner, or not at all? Would you have checked with Sarah first to see if she wanted to hear it before offering your opinion? How do

you think this feedback may have impacted Sarah? How do you determine when to share your professional opinion and when to withhold it?

14. The righting reflex: Do you agree with the premise that if you argue for change, clients will naturally react against this? Do you tend to lapse into the “righting reflex” and argue for change, particularly with clients who are harming themselves or engaging in risky behaviors? How have you noticed clients responding to this? Do you think it would have been difficult for you to keep from lecturing or warning or offering Sarah advice, given her risky behaviors?

SCENARIO TWO: HOLLY: AVOIDING DISCORD

Holly is the mother of a three-year-old daughter, Katie, who is considered overweight for her age. Her mother is reluctant to believe this. The emphasis is on Holly deciding whether she can make some changes toward the goal of stabilizing her weight.

15. Expressing concern: What do you like and dislike about the way Cole brought up her concerns about Katie’s weight? What do you think of how she used the pronoun “we” when expressing her concern, such as, “We would not want that to happen”? Why do you think she used “we” instead of “I”? Do you think it would be hard for you to bring this topic up to a patient? If you have had similar experiences, how have you handled them?

16. Check-in: What do you think of how Cole stopped to check-in with Holly when she sensed that she was having a reaction to Cole’s feedback? How do you think you would have responded when Holly stated that she doesn’t think Katie’s weight is a problem? Can you recall an experience you’ve had where you’ve given a client feedback that they haven’t appreciated? How have you handled this?

17. Asking permission: What do you think of how Cole asked Holly if she could give her information before simply offering what pediatricians and nutritionists recommend? Why do you think this is an important aspect of the MI approach? Can you see yourself doing this, or are you more likely to offer information

without asking permission first?

18. Urgency: Cole stated in the commentary that she should have stayed with the juice rather than addressing other areas of change. Do you agree with her about this? Can you relate to the sense of urgency to cover all the areas that need attention upfront? How do you work with this sense of urgency in yourself, particularly when there are several client behaviors about which you are concerned, or when there is pressure from your supervisor or another authority figure to cover all the areas?

19. Discord: What do you think about the concept of “discord,” and how this is used in MI rather than “resistance”? Does this add to your understanding of the client-therapist interaction? Do you think there is anything Cole said or did that may have contributed to defensiveness in Holly? What did you see Cole do to repair the disconnection? What feelings came up for you as you watched Cole and Holly come close to discord? Discuss a case in which you and a client experienced discord and how you handled it.

SCENARIO THREE: FRED: ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Fred is a rising senior in high school. His school counselor has asked to see him since he has not filled out his class schedule for his senior year. Fred is considering dropping out of school. The emphasis is allowing Fred to explore his reasoning for this decision and engage in a thoughtful process about the impact of this decision regarding his future goals in life.

20. Transparency: How successful do you think Cole was at being transparent with Fred in her preference for him staying in school while also not lecturing or pressuring him? Why do you think it is important for the therapist to be transparent about her preferences? What are your thoughts on expressing your opinion without coming across as lecturing/pressuring the client to change?

21. Ratio: Cole states that in MI “we are striving for more reflections than questions, generally by a two-to-one ratio.” What do you think of this ratio? What is your guess for the rationale for this

rule of thumb? In your work with clients, what would you say is the general ratio you employ of reflections to questions?

22. Just ask: New counselors often believe that they should always have a clear sense of what would be helpful and what direction to take, but, as Cole stated, there are times when she doesn't know where to go next. What do you think of her strategy of asking Fred what would be most helpful? Talk about how it is for you when you're not sure what direction to take with clients. How do you handle this? Is it easy for you just to ask the client, or does that go against your sense of being a "good" therapist?

23. Listening and speaking: What do you think of the ratio of listening to speaking that Cole demonstrated in this session with Fred? If you were working with Fred, do you think you would have said more? If so, what kinds of things would you have said? Do you agree with Cole that as long as the client is speaking and staying focused, her job is to listen and reflect the essence? Do you think that is enough? Why or why not?

24. Following and leading: There are times in this session when Cole follows Fred's lead, and other times when she takes the lead and is more directive. What do you think of her transitions from following to leading? Were there times when you would have been more or less directive than Cole? In your own work, do you tend to follow or lead more? How do you determine when to do which? Do you think adding focus or direction to the session is the responsibility of the therapist? Why or why not?

25. Envisioning: What do you think of how Cole invited Fred to envision his future by asking him how he imagines not finishing school would affect his dream to be a minister? Do you think her agenda came through here, or did she seem neutral to you?

26. Autonomy and agenda: One of the challenges that school counselors, parole officers, and others face is how to honor the client's autonomy when you have your own agenda. What are your thoughts on how Cole handled this challenge? How do you tend to manage this challenge?

27. **Don't grill:** Cole stated that at times she was unclear about Fred's reasons for his ambivalence, but decided not to ask a lot of questions so he didn't feel as if she were grilling him. What strategies do you use to stay engaged when you are not fully understanding a client or when a client is being vague? Is it hard for you to refrain from asking questions and stay with reflection?

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

28. **Personal reactions to clients:** Of the three vignettes on this video, which client do you think would be most challenging for you to work with? Which client most triggered your "righting reflex"—the natural tendency counselors have to make things better and leads them to tell clients what to do?

29. **Patience:** Cole stated multiple times that this approach requires patience. Were there times when you found yourself getting impatient as you watched the sessions? Do you think patience is something you'd like to develop more of, or are you naturally pretty patient? How do you work with your own impatience when it arises in sessions? Do you think a more directive approach would better suit your temperament? Why or why not?

30. **The model:** What are your overall thoughts about Motivational Interviewing? What aspects of this approach can you see yourself incorporating into your work? Are there some components of MI that seem incompatible with how you work? Are there certain clients you think MI wouldn't work with?

31. **Personal reactions to counselor:** How do you think you would feel about having Cole as your counselor? Do you think she could build a solid therapeutic alliance with you? Would she be effective with you? Why or why not?

Reaction Paper for Classes and Training

Video: *Increasing Importance in Motivational Interviewing*

- **Assignment:** Complete this reaction paper and return it by the date noted by the facilitator.
- **Suggestions for Viewers:** Take notes on these questions while viewing the video and complete the reaction paper afterwards. Respond to each question below.
- **Length and Style:** 2-4 pages double-spaced. Be concise. Do NOT provide a full synopsis of the video. This is meant to be a brief paper that you write soon after watching the video—we want your ideas and reactions.

What to Write: Respond to the following questions in your reaction paper:

- 1. Key points:** What important points did you learn about Motivational Interviewing in general and increasing importance in particular? What stands out to you about how Cole works?
- 2. What I found most helpful:** What was most beneficial to you about the model presented? What tools or perspectives did you find helpful and might you use in your own work? What challenged you to think about something in a new way?
- 3. What does not make sense:** What principles/techniques/interventions did not make sense to you? Did anything push your buttons or bring about a sense of resistance in you, or just not fit with your own style of working?
- 4. How I would do it differently:** What might you do differently from Cole when working with clients? Be specific about what different approaches, interventions and techniques you would apply.
- 5. Other questions/reactions:** What questions or reactions did you have as you viewed the sessions with Cole? Other comments, thoughts or feelings?

Role-Plays

After watching the video and reviewing the *Summary of Motivational Interviewing* in this manual, break participants into groups of two and have them role-play two different sessions so they can get a feel for the difference between the MI approach and a more confrontational approach. This is also an opportunity to practice giving feedback using the **Chunk, Check, Chunk** approach that Cole demonstrated and discussed in the video.

In both sessions, clients will role-play people mandated to counseling who initially do not see the importance of changing their behavior. Clients should choose a specific behavior to focus on, such as drinking, smoking, drug use, eating, or attendance at school. Students can play clients they have worked with or people they know personally; they can also base their characters on one of the vignettes from the video, or completely make them up.

Whatever the scenario, client and therapist should come up with it together, and before the session starts discuss what the behavior is and how it manifests in the client's life. Get enough information so that the therapist can role-play giving feedback to the client about his or her behavior, like Cole did with Sarah in the first scenario on the video.

First, have therapists embody a non-MI approach: that is, one characterized by confrontation, persuasion, explanation, and authority. Therapists should give the client feedback about their behavior in an authoritative manner: try to convince the client to change by arguing for change, offering advice, and giving them reasons for why they should change. If the client appears resistant, then the therapist may confront them about being in denial if this seems appropriate. Both the therapist and client should avoid the tendency to overact; try to make this as realistic as possible. Then have the dyad debrief the experience: how did clients and therapists feel during this exchange?

Next, have therapists practice both the technique and spirit of Motivational Interviewing, remembering that the therapist's role is not to try to influence the client in a particular direction, but to help

them consider all the aspects of the issue and to help them thoroughly explore it and come to their own conclusion. Experiment with the techniques of Motivational Interviewing, such as Open Questions, Affirmations, Reflections, and Summaries. The MI therapist should focus first on establishing a therapeutic relationship characterized by acceptance, respect, and partnership with the client, remembering the importance of honoring the client's autonomy. Therapists should pay particular attention to the "righting reflex" in themselves—the tendency to want to give advice or lecture the client, and, as much as possible, to offer a reflection instead of following that impulse. Then therapists should practice the **Chunk, Check, Chunk** approach to communicating feedback: provide a piece of information (such as results from the pretend questionnaire the client filled out), stop to check with the client about their reaction, and then add another chunk of information. Therapists should strive to provide feedback in an objective, nonjudgmental manner, staying attuned to the relationship. Then have the dyad debrief the experience: how did clients and therapists feel during this exchange?

After both sessions are complete, have participants switch roles, so that each gets to try out being the therapist and the client.

After the role-plays, have the groups come together to discuss their experiences. First, have the clients talk about what each session was like for them. What differences did they notice between the two approaches? Do they feel more inclined to change their behavior after either of the sessions? What do they think are the benefits and risks of an MI approach and a non-MI approach? What did they like and dislike about the way the therapist gave them feedback? Then have the therapists talk about their experiences. Which approach felt more natural for them? What do they like and dislike about the MI approach? Do they have the sense that they helped increase the client's sense of importance related to change? How was it to work with the client's low level of importance? How was it to give feedback in the two different styles? Which approach seemed more effective for increasing importance? Finally, open up a general discussion of the strengths and the challenges in employing a Motivational Interviewing approach.

Alternatively, you may have the exercise done in a triad, with one therapist, one client and one observer, and each party sharing during the debriefing. Observers can pay particular attention to the “righting reflex” in themselves and note when therapists follow this impulse and when they refrain. Observers can also stay attuned to the therapeutic relationship and notice what seems to be helpful and unhelpful in terms of increasing importance. When and why might they have done something differently from the therapist?

A third alternative is to do these role-plays in front of the whole group with one therapist and one client; the entire group can observe, acting as the advising team to the therapist. Before the end of each session, have the therapist take a break, get feedback from the observation team, and bring it back into the session with the client. Other observers might jump in if the therapist gets stuck. Follow up with a discussion on what participants learned about using Motivational Interviewing with mandated clients.

Related Websites, Videos and Further Reading

WEB RESOURCES

Website of Cathy Cole Training, Inc.

www.cathycoletraining.com

Motivational Interviewing

www.motivationalinterview.org

William R. Miller's website

www.williamrmiller.net

Stephen Rollnick

www.stephenrollnick.com

RELATED VIDEOS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY.NET

Motivational Interviewing Step by Step (4-DVD Series)

Motivational Interviewing with William R. Miller

William Miller on Motivational Interviewing

Brief Therapy for Addictions (7-DVD Series)

Stages of Change for Addictions with John C. Norcross

Treating Alcoholism in Psychotherapy (2-Volume Set) with Stephanie Brown

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Arkowitz, H., Westra, H.A., Miller, W.R., & Rollnick, S. (Eds) (2008).

Motivational Interviewing in the treatment of psychological problems, New York: Guilford.

Miller, W.R. & Carroll, K.M. (Eds) (2006). *Rethinking substance abuse:*

What the science shows, and what we should do about it,

New York: Guilford.

Miller, W. R. & Rollnick, S. (2002). *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing people for change*, New York: Guilford.

Naar-King, S. & Suarez, M. (2010). *Motivational Interviewing with adolescents and young adults*. New York: Guilford.

Rosengren, D. B. (2009). *Building Motivational Interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook*, New York: Guilford.

Complete Transcript of *Increasing Importance in Motivational Interviewing*

Victor Yalom: Hello. I'm Victor Yalom, and I'm delighted to be here today with Cathy Cole. Cathy has been training professionals in Motivational Interviewing for over 15 years. In this video, which is part of the series of Motivational Interviewing Step by Step, we dig into the important issue of importance. This is really fundamental, because, if a client doesn't feel that changing is important, they're unlikely to invest much energy into it. If you haven't watched the first video of this series, *Core Concepts in Motivational Interviewing*, we encourage you to do so. But just in case you haven't, or if you need a little refresher, Cathy, could you tell us exactly what Motivational Interviewing is?

Cathy Cole: Sure. Motivational Interviewing is a particular counseling approach. And the purpose of Motivational Interviewing is to give the client an opportunity to consider whether or not they want to make a change in their lives—either something they've been thinking about, or something that someone else has suggested to them they need to work on. In doing it, we talk to clients in a very conversational style. And the goal of this is to allow the client to hear their own reasons for change, if they're going to make change, how they might go about it, and what's uniquely going to work for them.

Yalom: And it's used in a variety of contexts?

Cole: It's used in a variety of contexts. It actually started out in the addictions field and, over time, it's really spread widely. It's used quite a bit now in health behavior change, dealing both with being proactive about one's health, as well as dealing with chronic disease management. It's used quite a bit in criminal justice, and it has a growing popularity in working with parents around the childhood obesity issue, as well as working with children and teenagers who are more capable of working on those issues independently from their parents. So quite a wide spread of how Motivational Interviewing is

being used now.

Yalom: And what distinguishes it most from more traditional approaches? What's the essence of that?

Cole: What really distinguishes it is that, in Motivational Interviewing, it's a very client-centered way of working. And that means that the client is the most important person in the room. The counselor is working to facilitate that client, again, examining what might be going on in the client's own thinking about this possibility of making change. And importantly, we are reinforcing client autonomy, and the counselor is not telling the client what they need to do. The client is coming up with the plan, and the counselor is helping to steer and guide that process.

Yalom: Client-centered, of course, coming from Carl Rogers, a Rogerian approach.

Cole: Absolutely. Starting from that Rogerian approach and then really focusing on the client beginning to determine, if they were going to make a change, why would they make change?

And then starting to strategically reinforce change talk as it begins to emerge.

Yalom: We'll get to that in a second, but I want to first talk about importance.

Cole: Sure.

Yalom: Almost any client, or any of us if we're about to embark on making some changes, we have some obstacles. In the field of counseling, we often think of it as resistance. How do you think about that in Motivational Interviewing, if a client comes to an initial session and they really don't think it's important that they change at all?

Cole: Well, first, I wouldn't consider that resistance. I would just consider it where the client is at this given point in time. So when we talk with a client about an issue, several things can get in the way of importance. In some situations, the client might not even know that a change is necessary. So we'll say we have a client who's coming into

a doctor's appointment, and the client is not really aware that they're having problems with high blood pressure, or that suddenly their blood sugars indicate that they have diabetes. So they're getting this news and now they're having to deal with how important it would be for them to change those health behaviors. So they're now having to examine their thoughts about this new issue in their lives.

Yalom: And in a case like that, they've just gotten the news.

Cole: They've just gotten the news, they're frequently in shock about that. It's hard for them to take it in. They may not feel that doing anything about this is really going to make any difference. So we, again, have to probe what is going into a client not feeling that something is important. Another thing that can get in the way is not having sufficient information about an issue, not having really thought through, "If I don't make these changes, what are the eventual outcomes for me? How is this going to affect my life?" In other situations, the client might feel that making a change is important, but other people in their lives may not feel that making that change is important and necessary.

An example I can give of this would be a mother who has just given birth to a baby, and perhaps, over the course of the first month or so, has given in to the pressure of other family members—perhaps mothers, aunts, grandmothers—to put rice cereal in the baby's bottle. So she now comes to the pediatrician for a well baby check-up. The pediatrician is saying, "That's not what we want you to do." Well, she probably didn't have that information. Now, she's getting this information, but she's getting very conflicting information from people in her life who are probably more a little more influential in her decisions than the pediatrician. So now, she has to deal with, "Okay, I'm getting this and I'm getting that from the other people. How do I resolve the issue of importance in terms of taking care of my baby?" So it's not a simple, straightforward issue. We have to really explore that in Motivational Interviewing.

Yalom: You mentioned a minute ago change talk, and that's an important concept.

Could you say what that is?

Cole: Sure. In Motivational Interviewing, we listen to the client and we're listening for, not only what they're saying, but how they're saying it. In the beginning, when the client is saying it's not important to change, that's what we call "sustain talk." "Everything's okay. Don't need to do anything different." Then, as we give the client an opportunity to explore the issue, they may begin to consider that change is something they want to think about, so that language starts to shift in the direction of, "Maybe I should think about this," or, "Oh, it really is more important than I realized."

At that point, we recognize that change talk, and we begin to elicit from the client more: "How have you changed your mind? What's happened with that, that you've begun to think about this is a different way? Where might this lead you?" So we now help them continue to explore the possibility of change.

Yalom: But you're careful not to jump on it and argue for change.

Cole: Absolutely. In Motivational Interviewing, the client is the one who's arguing for change, not the counselor.

The counselor's job is to provide the client the opportunity to argue for change, should they decide they want to.

Yalom: Before we jump into the first case vignette—we're going to see three examples of you working with clients on this video—any other thoughts about this topic of importance?

Cole: In terms of importance, if a client does not consider that making change is important, we're actually going nowhere. And it can be very frustrating for counselors to work with clients if the client is not saying that a change is important and the counselor feels very invested in it. So at that point, the counselor has to be very, very careful to not start arguing for change, because what we know is that the client, then, will start pushing back even more. So it's a delicate issue. But again, unless the client considers making change important, we're really going nowhere.

Yalom: So in terms of philosophy or what's often referred to as the spirit of Motivational Interviewing, that's a key part of being patient and not putting your agenda in.

Cole: By being patient and not pushing, really working in partnership with the client. Really collaborating, allowing the client to fully explore the issue, and finally, reinforcing client autonomy.

Yalom: And one of the key principles or ideas is that, if you are arguing for change—

Cole: The client will argue against it. And I think that, if any of us think about that in our own lives, we can probably think of situations where there was something that we were actually considering doing, that we thought was a good idea, but when somebody else started telling us we needed to do it or how we had to go about doing it, we found ourselves arguing against it, even if we have already intended to do it. So it just seems to be human nature to argue back.

SARAH: USING FEEDBACK

Yalom: Let's move onto the first of three vignettes in this video. We're going to see you working with clients. In this case, it's with Sarah. She's a young college student, and she's been sent to you at the college counseling center, presumably. She was caught violating a campus policy of drinking. I guess a good place to start would be, since she was sent to you, any thoughts about working with mandated clients?

Cole: Absolutely. Working with mandated clients is a particularly sensitive issue. You already have a client who doesn't want to be there, pretty much. And most clients coming in a situation like that expect that they are going to be treated in a certain way. They expect, maybe, that you're going to blame them, start telling them what they have to do, and not really involve them in the process.

Yalom: Lecture them?

Cole: Lecture them, exactly. And particularly in a situation like this, maybe read them the riot act about what's going to happen on campus if this goes on again. "Don't you know that this is a violation of policy?" Really, a very paternalistic, top down approach might be what many clients expect in mandated situations. And of course, that has happened in some mandated situations.

So attention to the development of the relationship with the client, and also recognition that the if the client doesn't want to be there, that's

okay. They don't have to be excited about being there. And being very clear about what the expectations are. Those are very critical parts in the beginning of a situation with a mandated client.

Yalom: I know that one of the concepts in Motivational Interviewing is discord. So there is discord right from the beginning.

Cole: Absolutely. In this situation with Sarah, even though she's quite sweet, there's still this discord. She doesn't want to be there. She thinks the rules are kind of silly. They've overdone this with her. So automatically, we're starting at a place where I have to let her know that however she views it is perfectly okay, that I'm here to try to help her with a process that the college said she needs to go through, but that that's a requirement. I'm not trying to convince her of anything.

Yalom: One of the things that you do here is you provide a lot of information to her, a lot of feedback, part of it based on the self-assessment instruments about drinking. What's your thought in terms of providing all this information?

Cole: That's a great question. Even though it's a required part of the protocol, Sarah, in our first interview, as you could see, really did not consider that her drinking was that problematic. It was no big deal, school had these crazy rules, she just happened to be caught. And giving her feedback, that allows her to hear the information that she actually came up with herself, that is comparing her drinking to drinking of other young college students her age. It also gives her information to look at some of the behaviors that she is exhibiting when she's drinking. The goal of this is for Sarah to be able to consider whether or not she thinks that the way she's drinking is, in fact, a problem for her.

Yalom: And even though you have some opinions about that, it's really what she thinks.

Cole: Absolutely. Even though I have opinions about it. And viewers will see that toward the end of the second interview, that I actually do give her my professional feedback and I am very honest with her about my concern, while at the same point, I'm emphasizing that only she can decide whether or not this is a problem and what she wants to do

about it.

Yalom: And in terms of how you provide information, there are a few Motivational Interviewing techniques or sequences. One of these is, “Chunk, check, chunk.” What is that?

Cole: Right. Hard to say more than once. Chunk, check, chunk is when I am working with a client and I give them a certain amount of information—in Sarah’s case, feedback from the self-assessment measures. I give her this chunk of information in a very objective fashion. “This is just what you said.” I then stop and check in with Sarah to see how she is responding to that, allowing her to talk about her own concern or her surprise, whatever that might be. Then we come back, and I provide another chunk of information out of the assessment. And we continue this way so that Sarah, then, can hear all the information from the report, and she can then start to draw her own conclusions about whether or not her drinking is problematic.

Yalom: And then, while we’re on that, there’s another sequence: “Elicit, provide, elicit”?

Cole: Exactly. Actually, in this sequence, you will see that elicit, provide, elicit is something that I do, as well. “Elicit” is where I start, and I ask the client what the client is thinking first. In this situation with Sarah, I say, “I have the results from the various self-assessments. But before we start, I’d like to find out from you what you thought about, what came out for you when you took these tests.” So I’m eliciting her thoughts, and then Sarah actually proceeds to talk about a lot of things that she was surprised about, that, when I get as far as the chunk, check, chunk, she has really said herself, and I just come in and really provide a reinforcement that she has already determined some of these particular areas, and that the information really does support that. So it’s really the same thing, just done from a different direction.

Yalom: Anything else we should watch for in this session, especially in terms of increasing importance?

Cole: I think so. There’s a point in the interview when Sarah moves from talking about reasons, objective information why she or any

person would perhaps deal with how much they're drinking, and she begins to personalize this into her need. When we move in that direction, I very much reinforce that, reinforce that she's starting to really take this seriously for herself, and proceed to develop that conversation more with her.

Yalom: Okay. Let's take a look at the session, and then we'll meet again afterwards.

Cole: Fantastic.

SARAH SESSION

Cole: So, Sarah, thanks for coming in today. As you know, I'm one of the counselors here in the student section of the university, and I appreciate you making the appointment today.

Sarah: Yeah, I actually wasn't the one that made it, so. But, yeah, thanks for meeting with me.

Cole: Well, I know that wasn't exactly your choice to be here.

Sarah: Yeah, it's funny because my RA was saying that this was going to really help me and, you know, the usual RA stuff that they have to say. But I don't see how it could—sorry. I think it will help maybe a little bit, but, yeah. I don't know. I don't really think there's anything really wrong, or anything.

Cole: All right. So you're doing it because your RA said it would help, and you kind of have to do it. You're not so concerned yourself about things.

Commentary: *This is the beginning of the session and I want to immediately attend to the relationship with Sarah. I use a reflection to demonstrate my understanding and focus on engagement. Sarah is beginning with what, in MI, we call "sustain talk," which means she has reasons to keep with the status quo. And it is important to try to avoid convincing her that she needs to be here.*

Sarah: No, well, okay, so what happened was, it really was really dumb. So we're not allowed to have any alcohol in our rooms, which I think is kind of a dumb rule. But I had some stuff in my room and I was just partying with my friends, and I sort of passed out. And it

totally was not a big deal at all, because I could have just slept it off. But they all got freaked out and went and got my RA, and then I guess took me to the hospital, because I woke up there. And I was like, “Why is there an IV in my arm? This is totally ridiculous.” Because I just would have been really hung over the next day. It wouldn’t have been a big deal or anything.

Cole: So, in your mind, this whole thing just got way out of control.

Commentary: *This is an example of an amplified reflection based on how I emphasize the words I use. This is amplified reflection was done toward the goal of engaging with Sarah to reflect her current view. This can feel tricky to some counselors because they get concerned that the behavior is being reinforced. Remember, we are early in the interview, and the first goal is engaging so the client feels comfortable talking.*

Cole: People got all anxious and panicky, and you were saying, “Wow, if you just left me alone things would have been all right.”

Sarah: Yeah, I am positive it would have been fine. And now my parents found out and they’re all freaked out. It’s like, “Okay, guys.”

Cole: All right. Well, I want to make certain that you understand what the process is here. Today we’ll just meet for a brief period of time, and then we’ll have a follow up appointment after that. But as you probably know, the way it works on campus is when you violate some regulation that has to do with alcohol, one of which is having it in the room, it does mean that you come before the board, and there’s the possibility of having academic probation unless you do these couple of counseling sessions like we’re doing now.

So today, what I’m going to have you do in just a few minutes is go over to a private office that’s right next door. And there’s some questionnaires that we have all students in these situations answer, that just give some information on your pattern of drinking and some of the behaviors in relationship to alcohol use. And, again, these are things just for you to answer in the best way possible for you. It’s just information that you’ll give.

And then in the second session, you and I’ll meet and we’ll be able to talk about those questionnaires. I’ll be able to give you some feedback.

And just from there, we'll figure out where things are going.

Commentary: *Here, I am setting the focus, being clear about the expectations.*

Sarah: Okay. I guess that's fine, yeah.

Cole: Okay. Any particular questions that you have before you do that or anything you want to bring up before—?

Sarah: I guess, I just was wondering if you are going to report back to anyone about this?

Cole: Okay, I'm glad you brought that up. Our conversations are confidential. I do have to report if you came to the sessions.

Sarah: Okay.

Cole: Beyond that, what you and I talk about—anything that you talk about, about yourself personally or any decisions that you make about drinking or not drinking, all of that is confidential between the two of us. As you think about it, to consider what your behavior would be like for the rest of the academic year, because they will be paying attention. If you've had one violation and you do the program, that usually goes okay. A second one is, generally, pretty serious, and usually means academic probation. But beyond that, what you and I talk about is confidential.

Commentary: *I should have likely started with discussing confidentiality. I should have specifically mentioned any restrictions having to do with safety, with issues around concerns over suicide. Especially in situations where the client is concerned over how the conversation might impact them in terms of college or their parents, if I don't address the parameters of confidentiality it can create a situation where the client does not speak freely.*

Sarah: Okay, cool.

Cole: Okay?

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Then I'm going to have you move next door, do those questionnaires. And will meeting this time next week work out okay

for you?

Sarah: Yeah, I don't have classes now, so that's fine.

Cole: Okay, great, then I'll see you this time next week, and we'll do some more talking, okay?

Sarah: Great, okay, thanks.

Cole: Thanks, Sarah.

Commentary: *I felt that this first part of the conversation went well.*

I wanted to be clear about the expectations, and, importantly, set up an atmosphere of acceptance and respect. This is very important in mandated situations, as the client likely shows up with expectations that they will be criticized, shamed, blamed, or told what to do.

SARAH, THE FOLLOWING WEEK

Cole: So, Sarah, it's good to see you again this week.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Let me tell you what I normally do in this interview. We'll talk for up to maybe 20 minutes or so. Normally what I do is just give some feedback from all of those questionnaires that you answered last week, and then we just talk together about that. But I always like to just start with wherever you would like to start, as well.

Commentary: *I am setting the focus, the agenda, but also providing flexibility for Sarah, as I want to see where she wants to begin with the feedback. Had she just asked me to begin by giving her the feedback, I would have done that. But note that when I let her decide where to begin, I reinforce her autonomy and ability to self-reflect. It also allows me to hear her reaction to the questions she answered and hear if there is any concern on her part. I demonstrate that I am partnering with her.*

Sarah: Yeah, I mean, when I was doing those questionnaires it was weird because I guess I don't really think about drinking being this huge deal. And I don't ever really think about how much I drink. And filling out how much I'm drinking every day was, like, whoa. I just didn't ever really think about it like that. If I try to actually count the drinks, it's kind of a lot.

Cole: You were pretty shocked at what you learned about your patterns.

Commentary: *I use a complex reflection to emphasize Sarah's beginning awareness. Complex reflections pick up on the emotional impact for the client. They are deepening the client's own self-reflection. Change comes when we begin to recognize that our current behavior is discrepant with how we see ourselves.*

Sarah: Well, yeah, because I also thought that I drank about as much as my friends did. And then I went back, and I was talking to my roommate about it, and I was telling her that I was drinking like ten drinks on the weekends, including Thursdays, so Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And she was, like, "Sarah, that is crazy. Where are you drinking this?" And I was like, "Well, different places." I don't know, my friends didn't—anyway, I don't know.

Cole: Yeah, this information has opened your eyes in some ways. And as you talked to your roommate about it, she was even shocked to know that you were drinking as much as you realized when you did the questionnaire.

Sarah: Yeah. I guess I thought that everybody was doing it, but that's not really what was going on.

Cole: Yeah, the fact that your drinking stands out from others' is clearly not something you had ever really taken into consideration before.

Commentary: *Thus far, I am very careful about using the conversational style of following, focusing on demonstrating my understanding of Sarah's situation and allowing her to continue to talk. The two reflections I have done have picked up on and, once again, reinforced Sarah's alarm about her drinking. This is beginning to address the importance of her looking at the drinking by just reinforcing what she is already realizing.*

Sarah: Yeah, so that was the thing that was really the most weird about doing those forms.

Cole: Okay. Anything else out of the questionnaires that stuck out for you, that kind of got your attention?

Sarah: The sex stuff was, I don't know. I felt a little bad about myself, I guess. Sometimes it makes me feel not good because I don't date people because it's college, and I just want to have fun. But then I don't know if these dudes are respecting me. These guys that—I don't know.

Cole: So as you think back on some of the ways you've conducted yourself sexually when you've been drinking, you're embarrassed about that.

Commentary: *Notice how short the complex reflection is, how much I avoid repeating content and move to the meaning, a way to deepen Sarah's understanding.*

Sarah: Yeah. I was talking to my roommate about that, too. And it's just, like, "What am I doing?"

Cole: Yeah, even though you were going to do this because you certainly didn't want the negative outcomes from doing the counseling, you really are beginning to think about this in a different way.

Commentary: *I respond in a way that begins to reinforce the smallest amount of doubt to pick up again on Sarah addressing the importance of this issue.*

Sarah: Sort of. So I went out last weekend, but I was thinking about it more because there was this guy that was trying to dance with me. And I was like, "You know, you're really ugly and I don't—" Normally I'd be like, "Okay, whatever." But I don't know.

Cole: So you made some change last weekend based on starting to think more about this for yourself.

Commentary: *Note how I am reinforcing her change talk.*

Sarah: Yeah. I got pretty drunk still, but I feel like I didn't get as drunk. I don't know. That's kind of dumb.

Cole: You felt like you drank less.

Sarah: I did, yeah. I drank maybe, like, six drinks or something, which is, I guess—I was still pretty drunk. I couldn't have driven or anything. But I wasn't falling down.

Cole: So, again, the effect of answering all these questions and taking a look at yourself was that you decided, at least last weekend, to cut back some in how you were drinking. And you also had a different reaction to somebody who was hitting up on you and made a different kind of decision than you might have in the past.

Commentary: *I am using an affirmation to reinforce the efforts she already made and note her energy shifts. It would be easy to downplay her changes, as they were slight, but this would be an error. I want to reinforce any change momentum that client demonstrates. Minimizing is a roadblock and would give Sarah the message that she has to meet some standard of mine.*

Sarah: Yeah. I guess that's—But it just feels like, “What else am I going to do?” Maybe not on the weekdays, but on a Saturday night.

Cole: Like there are not any other options available to you other than to get pretty wasted.

Sarah: Yeah. I guess it just seems kind of sad. Because the thing to do on campus, people just watch movies in their dorm room or watch episodes of “Lost” or something. I don't want to do that. It's boring.

Cole: So some of the things that other people do when they're not out drinking a lot are things that seem kind of boring to you. It's almost like you're not quite sure what to do with this.

Sarah: Yeah, because I have so much fun when I go out with my friends and everyone's drinking and hanging out. I don't know. It just seems like, if I didn't do that, I don't know what I would do.

Cole: Kind of like you wouldn't know where you'd fit in and what things would be like for you socially.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Well, one of the things that you mentioned was when you answered all the questions, and even when you talked to your roommate, that it looked like you might be drinking more than other kids that you're out drinking with. What's your perspective on that?

Commentary: *Sarah is presenting a perfect example of ambivalence, with a mix of some recognition of difficulty, with a huge amount of doubt*

about what she would do. I asked an open question to continue evoking from her. Evoking is simply asking an open question that provides the client an opportunity to continue examining the issue at hand. At this point, I am using a directive style of communication because I want to get more information on her point of view.

Sarah: Yeah, it's like I drink as much as a guy. And that might be part of it. Be one of the guys and shotgun beers, and do a bunch of shots.

Cole: You wanting the guys to see you in a certain way that the drinking plays some part in.

Sarah: Yeah, because people are, like, "Oh, yeah, Sarah can really hold her liquor." I don't know, it makes me feel tough, I guess.

Cole: Like a badge of honor in some ways.

Sarah: Yeah, it totally is. And then everyone's, like, "Oh my God, she's so crazy." People are sort of shocked by it. "Oh, my God, I can't believe she's doing that." But then they're also like, "That's kind of cool that she can—"

Cole: So your view is that your peer group sees this as kind of a good thing about you. This makes Sarah stand out.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: And then that feels pretty good to you.

Sarah: And there's other stuff. It's not like I only do that. It's just that, having to go to class and just sit there in this giant lecture, it's just...

Cole: This makes you unique—makes you not one of thousands that are around here on campus.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: It just makes you unique.

Sarah: Yeah, and getting all dressed up and looking really cute, it's just something special you can do.

Cole: So it's hard for you to think about having this level of fun without drinking the amount that you do.

Commentary: *I have been using quite a few complex reflections. This*

is an example of a guiding style of conversation, as these reflections are allowing Sarah to add more detail to her ambivalence. A guiding style is using a combination of open questions and reflections to keep us on course for examining the current issue. I use it here because Sarah has started to be more specific about the complexity of the drinking, and I want to open this up more to understand the issue more fully.

Sarah: Maybe not. Sometimes it's not. Barfi ng sucks. And being really hung over sucks.

Cole: So there are some down sides to it.

Commentary: *I immediately note this. These are reasons from the ingredients of change. Reasons for change are the more objective factors that a person may give about changing. In MI, we elicit reasons, but then we need to listen for whether the client believes these reasons are relevant to them and really needs to make a change.*

Sarah: Yeah. And I guess I have trouble being like, "Okay, I feel really good now," and so it feels like, "If I drink even more I'm going to feel even better." But then at a certain point I really don't feel good at all and it's hard to know when that point is.

Cole: Got you. So what I did—and some of these things you've said already. You were shocked that when you looked at your drinking, that you thought that maybe you drank about the same as other kids, but, actually, on the questionnaires it shows that you drink about twice as much, although you feel like you drink about the same or maybe even less sometimes.

Commentary: *Sarah has now given me her view and her ambivalence about drinking without my giving feedback. Now I move to providing the feedback. And because she has said most of this, it really serves to reinforce what she has learned about herself and her own self-reflection.*

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Compared to other young women your age. And you've said this, I think, that most of the time when you're drinking, you would be above the legal level for intoxication. And from those questionnaires, since you've started college, you've continued to increase how much you drink. Why don't you stop and get a sense of what just that fi rst

little part of information—what happens for you with that?

Sarah: Yeah.

Commentary: *The method I am using in providing feedback is called, “chunk, check, chunk.” This method is used when the counselor has information that needs to be shared with the client, with the goal of increasing importance. The counselor provides a piece of information, as in the results from the self-report, stops to check with the client on the reaction, and then adds another chunk of information. This continues on for a bit. Note that I constantly strive on providing feedback in an objective, nonjudgmental manner, because I do not want to damage the relationship.*

Sarah: It’s weird. I didn’t really drink in high school, I guess. And I feel like that’s part of why it seems so fun, because I never got invited to those parties where people were drinking.

But, yeah, I drink a lot more now than I did last year, I guess.

Cole: So you know that you’ve increased the amount that you drink.

Sarah: Yeah. I guess hadn’t really thought about it, but, yeah.

Cole: Okay. Let’s move to the next section.

Sarah: Okay.

Cole: The next section talks about outcomes or consequences from alcohol use that’s happened at three to five times in the last six months. These are the things that showed up out of yours: not being able to do your homework or study for a test. Getting into fights or causing scenes in public places. Friends telling you that they were embarrassed about how you acted. Feeling that you needed to drink more to feel high. Missing some days of school. Most days you spent some time thinking about “when’s the next time I’m going to get to drink?” And you had times when you could not remember some of the evening from the night before.

Sarah: Yeah. That happens a fair amount.

Cole: The last one?

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Not being able to remember from the night before.

Sarah: Yeah. That's another thing with drinking is you don't really know the point at which you get blackout drunk. And then I don't even know how much I drank after I've got blackout.

Cole: Right. What's it like to realize that you've got that missing amount of time?

Sarah: Sometimes it's kind of scary. It's better when my friends are, like, "Oh, my God, I can't believe what you were—" and they can tell me what I did. But it is kind of scary when they're like, "Oh, I don't know where you went at that party." And then I wake up in my bed but I don't know how I got here.

Cole: That's pretty distressing to think about that.

Commentary: *I note her reaction, which is a way to reinforce Sarah's looking at importance.*

Sarah: Yeah, it's kind of scary. And there was one time that I woke up with somebody that I didn't know and that was really scary. And I just left because I didn't even want to deal with it.

Cole: It looks like all of this is hitting you a little bit harder than you expected.

Sarah: Yeah, I guess it is.

Cole: Yeah. Can I go to just this last little segment and then we'll—okay. These are the things that you say are good things or likely to occur things based on using alcohol—that you feel more outgoing, you feel calmer, you think you're funnier or more interesting, you're sexier and a better lover.

And then kind of following into that, the last one is the impact that it does have on your sexual behavior when you're drinking. You put down that you felt like you compromise your standards. You had sex with people you would not have if you had not been drinking. You took some risks sexually, felt bad about yourself the next day, and you started worrying about seeing the person that you had sex with. So, again, that's just kind of the summary out of this.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: I'm not really sure where you would like to go from here. The decisions that you make about how much you drink, what changes, if any, you want to make in that, are clearly yours. In terms of coming in and doing the requirements, you've done what's required. But I don't like to just leave the conversation there. I'd like to just hear from you.

Commentary: *I'm using the summary, followed by a key question. In Motivational Interviewing, the question is designed to allow the client to let me know where we're going next. My hope in the key question here, which is, "I'd just like to hear from you"—my hope in doing this is that Sarah will respond with more change talk.*

Sarah: Yeah, I guess—I don't like feeling this way about it. And I don't know. My friends try to be nice to me about it, I guess. They make me feel better about stuff, but maybe I need to talk to them more about—because I feel like if someone told me, "Hey, you shouldn't drink anymore," then I probably wouldn't. But no one ever says that.

Cole: When you say drink any more, you mean, like, "You've had enough for tonight"?

Sarah: Yeah, because I just don't understand how people can have two beers and be, like, "Oh, my God, I'm so tipsy." Because it's, like, "Two beers, seriously?" But—

Cole: It seems like you're wanting to do something about this, but you're not quite clear what it is you want to do.

Commentary: *Note how I am reinforcing change talk, particularly her desire. We have to hear desire before any possible change can occur. Personalizing reasons to need is also necessary. It is easy to theorize, but deciding that we need to do something is the next step.*

Sarah: Yeah. It's just so hard being in that kind of atmosphere when drinking is so much a part of what people are doing. But then there are these rules that are like, "No, you can't do it at all." And it just is confusing because people are doing it anyway. I got caught, yeah, but everyone on my hall drinks. It's not just me.

Cole: Right. And I can see where it could be easy for us to get caught up in the rule part. But I'm more concerned about where you are for yourself with this. You're saying, "On the one hand, my friends are

kind of helpful. And, on the other hand, maybe they could be more helpful. I also don't know how people don't drink as much at parties. You're just a little bit in the dark about what to do here.

Commentary: *I acknowledge the rule part to let Sarah know that I understand. But then I shift focus and move back to Sarah so that I can pick up on her change momentum.*

Sarah: Yeah. That's sort of what it's like. My roommate said, "Well, what if you just didn't drink at all?" And I was just, like—

Cole: That doesn't seem like a good idea for you.

Sarah: No. She seemed to think it was a good idea, but it just seems like the people that don't drink at all, everyone's always, like, "Why aren't you drinking?" And then they're, like, "Oh, I don't drink." And everyone's, like, "O...kay."

Cole: So you wouldn't want to be seen that way. That seems kind of weird to be seen as the not-drinker kind of person.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Yeah. Well, let me ask you this. We've got a few more minutes to talk, and one of the things I want you to know is that, although, you've done the two sessions, you've done the requirement, that if you decide you would like to continue talking to me about this I'm certainly available. It's not a requirement, but I'm certainly available. Because I do sense that this has you thinking in a way that you hadn't really before. So I don't want to have you thinking and drop you off at the pass. It sounds like when you think about your drinking and you think about other young women who are drinking, they don't seem to drink as much as you do at parties.

Commentary: *I want to stay with this momentum. Sarah is concerned, and I don't want to neglect that just to fulfill the requirement.*

Sarah: Some of them do. And that's another thing. I know the other people that drink a whole lot, and I never thought of myself as drinking as much as they did, but then when I thought about it I was like, "Yeah. Man. I'm one of those girls." And a lot of them you're, like, "Oh, my God, she's hooking up with all these gross guys." And

then I was like, “What if that’s how my friends see me?” That’s the thing that’s the scariest, is that’s what I’m doing. So it would not be unreasonable or anything for people to think of me as...

Cole: One of those girls.

Sarah: Yeah.

Commentary: *Sarah is now talking more about need, personalizing her situation. Need tells me that Sarah is beginning to relate to the drinking on a deeper level. She is now beginning to talk about values, how she wants to be seen.*

Cole: Yeah. Well, just in the few minutes that we have left today, I’m wondering what, if anything, you’d like to think about doing in terms of your drinking pattern?

Commentary: *Here I am asking an open question to determine where Sarah is, relative to change. As we’re getting close to the end of the session, I want Sarah to leave with some plan regarding her drinking, if she is interested.*

Sarah: Trying to drink less would be good.

Cole: Okay.

Sarah: And I don’t really know how much less I need to drink. I hadn’t really thought about it.

Cole: Would you like to know the recommendation in terms of trying to keep your alcohol level at a reasonable level?

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: About one drink an hour.

Sarah: Okay, yeah. Whoa.

Cole: That says “Boo.”

Sarah: Okay. The thing that really does it for me is drinking shots. And maybe if I just didn’t do that, then it would be easier to—

Cole: Okay, so cutting out the shots would be a place that you could start that would certainly be a big shift. And that would mean that you’d be drinking—how would that shift that pattern? What would

that move it to if you took out the shots?

Commentary: *Sarah is more likely to make a change in her drinking if she has started to talk about what she would do. I am using envisioning to allow her to try out the change by speaking about it.*

Sarah: The thing about the shots is that you do, like, four in half an hour. So then you're just like already pretty drunk. So if I didn't do that then it would be drinking beer. And I don't really drink that's super—If I don't shotgun beers, if I don't do that, then I mean I probably wouldn't drink one an hour, but I could try to do that.

Cole: That'd be a huge shift, though, if you took out those four shots.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Yeah. What do you think that would be like for you to do that?

Sarah: Doing shots is fun, but it's also kind of fun to see other people do them. I think it would be okay because when people are doing shots not everybody is doing it.

Cole: So you wouldn't be standing out in the crowd as somebody not doing it, because other people don't do it as well.

Sarah: Right, yeah.

Cole: Okay. Let's say, probably the next time you're going out would be this coming weekend. How likely is it that you would try taking out the shots?

Commentary: *Again, I am staying with Sarah's momentum. Note that I am allowing her to set the pace and the plan. I have given her direct feedback, but she has to decide what she will do.*

Sarah: I think I could definitely, at least, not do a ton of shots.

Cole: Okay.

Sarah: And I think that I could probably not do any. Or maybe just do one.

Cole: Work hard on either none or certainly cutting it back maybe to one.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: All right.

Sarah: Because they're kind of gross anyway. It's just funny to do it, but it doesn't taste good or anything.

Cole: Yeah, so the doing is just the fun part, but you don't really like it all that much.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cole: Well, our time's about finished for today. So, again, in summary, I hear that, again, already last weekend, you did try to drink less. You realized that there was somebody hitting on you, and rather than just going along like you might have before, you actually turned the guy down. And that was a big shift for you. You really are realizing that the drinking has more of an impact in your life than you had thought, that you're drinking more than others your age and that you're wanting to start to make some shift in that and, at least, begin by cutting out the shots or certainly making it maybe down just to one.

I'm wondering about whether you want to continue conversation with me, or how you would like to leave that.

Commentary: *As we are getting close to the end, I summarize and, once again, use a key question. I want to reinforce Sarah's autonomy but also let her know the option of continuing to see me.*

Sarah: Yeah, I could, I think I would like that.

Cole: I would like that, too. Again, I don't have any agenda about where you go with your drinking. I have to just to give you my professional feedback on it. How you much you drink is pretty alarming. And the increase and, certainly, the risky sexual behavior—all of those things certainly are alarming. And I'd be happy to continue to talk with you for you to make decisions about where you'd like to go with how alcohol fits into your life.

Commentary: *I am honest but not pushing anything, emphasizing autonomy. My feedback is just a reinforcement of how Sarah is seeing things and adding my professional perspective in a very nonjudgmental style. I do it at the end to underscore her realizations.*

Sarah: Okay, yeah, I would want to meet again.

Cole: Okay. Well, I have this same time on my calendar for next week if you'd like to have that. Would that work out for you?

Sarah: Mm-hmm.

Cole: Okay, great. Then I'll see you next week.

Sarah: Thanks.

Cole: Thanks.

SARAH DEBRIEF

Yalom: Well, that was very impressive. As we talked about before, working with a mandated client is dicey. I thought you handled it really well. I thought it was a nice example of Motivational Interviewing. How did you feel about the session?

Cole: I felt really good about the session. Sarah is a very compelling young woman. Clearly, it came across, I think, as a counselor, that I was concerned about her, and at the same time, I wasn't going to push her. So I had a couple of goals in mind. I really wanted her to be able to examine her drinking and her behavior and come to terms with that meant to her. I also wanted her to know that I wasn't there just to do my job, that I was there to be genuinely interested in her and to be available to her if she wanted to continue to sort this out, which, in the end, she decided to do. And I had that hope. And I was glad that wanted to do that. If she had chosen not to, I would have honored that as well, but I would have kept the door open for her.

Yalom: Motivational Interviewing did start out in the addictions field, widely used there as well as other fields now. And traditionally, and still very commonly in the addiction field, addiction counselors, many of them have background as addicts themselves. So there's this whole hard-core approach of breaking through resistance, breaking through denial. People have to be abstinent. This is a very different approach.

Cole: It is a different approach. The others have certainly been traditional, and perhaps for some people those have been effective. But in Motivational Interviewing, we really want the client to be the one who determines if they have a problem. And we want to give them full opportunity to be able to examine this. And then if they decide

that this issue—drinking, in this case—is a problem, to then help that person decide what their goals are. It could be that Sarah decides over time, as she begins to do in this clip, that she wants to try to moderate. She wants to go to harm reduction. So we really want the client to establish their own goals. It is a different approach than has been traditional, often, in the addictions field. When Dr. Miller began his work in Motivational Interviewing, it was quite revolutionary then to approach the client from this direction.

Yalom: And I think it's very difficult for especially traditionally trained counselors in the addiction field, but I think for any caring professional, to watch someone engage in, in this case, potentially very self-destructive behaviors, both with the drinking and sexually—there could be problems with that—and not want to jump in and say, “Stop! You're really putting yourself in danger.”

Cole: Absolutely. And that would be what we talked about in Core Concepts: the “righting reflex,” which we can talk a little bit about again. Naturally, I'm not sitting here in this interview as a counselor who is not concerned about Sarah. I am very concerned. And I'm having to sit on my righting reflex big time. That righting reflex is the natural inclination that I have, that I want to make things better for her. I want her to be safe. I don't want her to be heading down the path of something that could really be dangerous and problematic for her. And I also know, as a counselor, that if I start pushing at her about that, that she's just going to back away from me. So I have to control my righting reflex. Again, though, as you've watched carefully in the video, you can see that I do give my professional feedback and express my concern, but I always return to her autonomy, her choice, being available to work with her around that. But sitting on that righting reflex is something that every counselor will have to struggle with. It never goes away. It's okay. We just have to be aware of it and not act on it.

Yalom: Now, you've also trained many, many professionals, so I'm sure you've encountered that. What would you advise? You've said about what's hard about people. How do you help people learning this approach learn not to fall into that trap?

Cole: Trap, exactly. Well, actually, some people, just by virtue of their own professional training, have been taught to tell people what to do, to be the expert. So just knowing that there's some retraining or untraining that has to go on. One of the other things that I have noticed for myself and for other counselors is that we have a tendency to be pulled into the righting reflex in certain kinds of situations. So I say to people, if they can become aware of when the lure toward the righting reflex is the strongest for them, then they can start to know that that's a place that they're automatically going to have to restrain themselves.

And I must say that I train people in workshops, by the end of a three-day training, people are usually starting to do a bit of laughing at themselves, like, "Uh-oh. There's the righting reflex again." And to me, that is a great beginning spot. If you can start to see when you're falling into it, then you have the opportunity to do something about it.

Yalom: Now, if you were to continue to work with Sarah—say she tried moderated drinking and that didn't work—I assume you'd just continue the same approach?

Cole: I would stay with the same approach, but if she were trying moderation and that weren't working, I might begin to wonder with her what it would be like to try a period of abstinence—again, not telling her that she has to do this, but to begin to explore whether or not that was something she was willing to entertain, just to see how that would go for her. But as she tried moderation, I would be asking her to actively tell me how she thought it was going, and in what ways she felt like it was decreasing problems in her life and perhaps in what ways it was still continuing to be problematic for her. But we would continue, and we would just stay in exploration.

HOLLY: AVOIDING DISCORD

Yalom: In the next vignette, we're going to see you in the role of a health educator, and you're working with Holly, a mother. Can you set up this scene for us?

Cole: Sure. I'm working in the role of health educator. And Holly has come in to do the check-up for her daughter, Katy. In the course of my

reviewing Katy's information, I have determined that Katy's weight is a little more than what I would like to see on the weight chart. So I'm trying to bring this to Holly's attention so that we can talk about what measures she might take to make sure that Katy doesn't continue to gain weight at this rate.

Yalom: And as we'll see, she gets a little defensive. In MI, you would call this "discord."

Cole: Right.

Yalom: As opposed to the first session with Sarah, she comes with discord. She's already upset about having to go there. And this is the other kind of discord, where it's created in the session.

Cole: Yes, that's right, because Holly and I have a preexisting relationship. I've been working with her around her daughter for a while. So we know each other. So she comes in expecting that we're just going to be having a conversation, that everything is okay with Katy. And as any parent would be, the moment that I bring up something is not quite the way we would want it with the child, she becomes a little defensive. That's going to happen with every parent. So at that moment, just by virtue of my bringing up the information about the weight, I have inadvertently created discord.

Yalom: Is there something you could have done different? How did you feel about the way it goes?

Cole: In the beginning, I don't think there was anything different that I could have done. I needed to bring up the information. But as we went through the interview, I had to really pay attention, and there were times that I was interacting with Holly and I was creating more discord, one, because I started telling her what to do, quite honestly, without really eliciting from her, not really even asking her permission. So that naturally began to create some discord. You'll see how Holly pushes back from me. And then, actually I created some more discord just because I brought up way too many subjects with Holly. I tried to accomplish too much in one interview with her. I should have been more focused on just one thing and not bringing up several topics with her at one time.

Yalom: Yeah, you were bringing up a lot of information.

Cole: Yeah, and this happens a lot, I think, for counselors, particularly people who are in this kind of educator role or dietician or nutritionist. They want to cover everything. It's totally understandable. We want to tell everybody everything we know, and we want to solve all the problems at once, rather than being more conservative and focusing just on one thing that the client might be willing to buy into and actually do well, to make some progress on.

Yalom: And that's what they're trained in, as well, is being an expert in this field, and they want to impart their expertise.

Cole: Exactly. So when I talk about Motivational Interviewing and I'm teaching people Motivational Interviewing, I like to distinguish between the idea of being the expert and having expertise to offer. Naturally, when clients come to us, they expect that we know something about what we're doing. And we do know a lot. So as we work with a client, there are times that our expertise is important in information they might need. We bring in ideas that might be helpful to them, only after we've elicited from them, but we are not the experts on what is going to work for another person.

Yalom: Okay. Let's take a look at this scene.

SESSION WITH HOLLY

Cole: Holly, it's good to see you today. How you doing?

Holly: It's good to see you. I'm doing great. How about you?

Cole: I'm doing okay.

Holly: Good.

Cole: Yeah. Things still going okay at your job?

Holly: They're going great, yeah, thanks.

Cole: Yeah, you really like that place don't you?

Holly: I do. I love it, yeah.

Cole: Good. Well, today we've got about 20 minutes that we can talk together—15 to 20 minutes. And I've just looked over the information from the checkup for your daughter, who's just turned three, I

understand. Katie.

Holly: Yes.

Cole: Right. And I wondered if there was anything out of her checkup that you wanted to particularly focus on today in the time we're talking together.

Holly: It just all seemed pretty good. Seemed like things were going okay, which I was happy about. So, yeah, I think things are good.

Cole: Yeah, it looks like developmentally she's just moving right along. And I'm not surprised that she's quite the talker because. I'm sure you really enjoy having conversation with her.

Holly: Oh, yeah. We talk all the time.

Cole: Yeah. Well, out of her check-in, there was one area that I am concerned about that I wanted to bring up with you today.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: I'm concerned about her weight. In my looking at it, we have all these charts and profiles and graphs, but rather than go through all that, I would just say that in terms of looking at her weight, she is beyond where we would want children of her age and also her height to be in terms of her weight.

Holly: Okay.

Commentary: *Once again, I'm using "chunk, check, chunk." Notice how I provide a chunk of information, then elicit Holly's response. And the conversation develops from here with the ability to provide another chunk of information. In this case, as the counselor, I use this method as Holly had no concerns herself at the check-in on her daughter.*

Cole: Yeah. That surprises you.

Holly: Well, I know she still has her baby fat. Yeah, I just didn't think about her as having a weight problem.

Cole: And I hate to even start using language of "weight problem," because that's just such heavy duty stuff, but my concern would be that she seems to be gaining weight a little faster than we would want her to for her age, and that if she continues to gain at this rate, that she

really is going to be very much in the overweight category, and that would be something we would not want to happen.

Holly: Well, you don't know that she's going to keep gaining weight. That seems a little bit like a jump to take.

Cole: That's absolutely right. I don't know that she would be. But where she is now, currently in her weight, is of concern to me.

Holly: Well, I mean, concern for what? I don't really understand.

Cole: Well, again, you're right. We can't really predict that she would continue to gain at the same rate and be overweight. But when we see a child already in that higher percentile weight-wise than what we would expect for a child of her age and height, then it's just an area that we like to focus on so that we can try to see what can happen with that at this point.

I'm kind of tossing all this at you, and I can imagine that you're having all kinds of reactions to it.

Commentary: *I'm sensing reactions, naturally, from Holly. I need to stop and check in. I am observing Holly and can see that she is looking skeptical and has pulled away from some of her friendlier, engaged stance. I cannot ignore this as I would be ignoring the relationship, so I stop and check in.*

Holly: Well, I just don't really see her having any problems right now. She's doing really well and she seems really happy. And to have to think about her losing weight just seems a little—I don't know. Am I supposed to put her on a diet at age three?

Cole: No, absolutely. I hear where you're going with this.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: Yeah, you're like, "Oh, my gosh, what is this woman talking about here?" Yeah, just for information-wise, I'm not talking about losing, like, going on a diet. I'm talking about maybe taking a look at how she currently eats, the kinds of things she drinks, so that we could focus on her not continuing to gain weight at the same rate.

Commentary: *Another chunk of information to clarify, to provide Holly with the specifics of how I hope we can approach the weight issue and*

clear up the brewing misconception she has. As you will hear in the next response, Holly relaxes a bit.

Holly: Okay, she does love sweets. She does.

Cole: Ah, okay. Again, I know I just kind of dumped this right on you. How would you like to talk about this today? I don't want to make those decisions about it for you.

Holly: What do you mean, how would I like to talk about it?

Cole: Well, if you decided that you wanted to have her not keep gaining weight, kind of holding steady for a little bit, or just looking at her eating patterns, how would you want to go about talking about that?

Holly: I don't know. Shall we talk about what she eats and stuff?

Cole: That's one way we could go about it. I often talk with moms about how their kids, what they typically eat and, also, of what they typically drink during the day.

Commentary: *I give her information and then let her decide where to start. This is consistent with Motivational Interviewing. The client is unclear, and I provide information for her to then choose, supporting client choice and autonomy.*

Holly: Okay. I'm not with her during the weekdays, but I know she loves her juice, because she's been drinking that a lot. I have to get juice a lot.

Cole: Okay.

Holly: She likes that, gosh, what is it, the grape cranberry, I think it is.

Cole: Okay.

Holly: That seems like it's healthy. Because I'm just so busy and stressed, I have to do fast food. Because it's just hard to cook every night.

Cole: Well, yeah, you have two children. You not only have Katie, you also have Jack, I know, as well.

Holly: Right. And I'm exhausted by the time I get home from the salon.

Cole: Yeah. So let's back up a sec. So she goes to daycare during the day.

Holly: Oh, she's with my mom.

Cole: She's with your mom during the day, okay. So one of the things you know is that she drinks—she likes juice.

Holly: Yes.

Cole: Okay, and then what about intake of things like milk?

Holly: She does like milk.

Cole: Okay.

Holly: Yeah, we usually give her a glass of milk with each meal.

Cole: Okay.

Holly: Which I thought was—that's a good thing, right?

Cole: Sure, milk is great. I'm always concerned, with any parent—and being a parent myself, I know how sensitive we are about these things—that you don't feel like I'm jumping on you. But I'm really wanting this to be a benefit to both you and your daughter.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: So what would you guess would be the amount of juice that she drinks during the day, if you could just kind of take a guess at that?

Holly: Oh, gosh, maybe, I don't know, four glasses or something.

Cole: Okay, and about how big would those glasses be? What's your sense of that?

Holly: Maybe about that big.

Cole: Yeah, so we're looking at, maybe, eight ounces or so, I guess, would be about that amount, okay.

Holly: Yeah.

Cole: All right, well, just as some information, if I could give you.

Commentary: *I am asking permission here before giving the information. In Motivational Interviewing, we always ask permission before giving information. Once again, this supports client autonomy and*

demonstrates partnering with a client.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: What pediatricians and nutritionists recommend is no more than four to six ounces of juice a day for a child that age.

Holly: A day?

Cole: A day.

Holly: One glass?

Cole: Yeah. Parents are really shocked about that.

Holly: That's surprising. You just think of kids drinking juice all the time with the juice boxes.

Cole: Exactly. Yeah. And why do you think we might emphasize that?

Holly: Which?

Cole: Not having more than four to six ounces.

Holly: Not having more?

Cole: Yeah.

Holly: I guess it has too many calories?

Cole: Yeah, it really does. And I don't know with the juice that Katie's drinking, if it's all juice or not, but if it's a blend, then it's probably got some sugar in it, even, as well.

Holly: Yeah, it's pretty sweet.

Cole: Yeah, so even with just straight juice, that's a lot of calories and, also, even though it's natural sugar, it's a lot of sugar to have in the diet. So, certainly, that's one thing we can look at.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: And then—

Holly: I just don't know how to—I mean, she loves her juice.

Cole: Got you.

Holly: And I don't know—to go home and be like, “Katie, it's only half a cup a day now from four cups,” I just don't—

Cole: Well, if you were going to try to make some changes, I agree, that would be an abrupt change for her, a big one. If you were going to try to make some changes in that, what do you think you would do? How would you go about it?

Holly: I don't know.

Cole: Okay. One thing would be, right, to kind of gradually cut it back until she was having more of the recommended amount during the day.

Commentary: *I have moved into the righting reflex, which is the natural tendency counselors have to make things better and leads them to tell clients what to do, rather than continue to elicit, offer information with permission, and elicit again. I did not provide possible options, and most importantly, I did not ask her permission.*

Listen to what I get back from Holly, as she responds with a less than enthusiastic response and basically rejects what I said. If I had asked permission, she may have been more likely to consider this.

Holly: Is there another idea?

Cole: That's certainly a great way to do it. I know one thing that some parents—because you're not the only parent dealing with this. This juice thing has really gotten to be a big deal.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: Let her have just a smaller amount, but have it with her meals or her snacks throughout the day.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: Sometimes, also, as another idea, and this is for you to decide what would work for you, sometimes parents actually water the juice down, so that you would have it in water. But, again, you're going to have to know what would work for you and Katie.

Holly: Right.

Cole: You'd have to work with that.

Holly: I could try that. If I put a little bit of water in she might not notice at first. And then make it more.

Cole: Yeah. So just shifting that would be a big shift.

Holly: Okay. I could probably do that.

Commentary: *This is a very weak commitment, but I ignore that and move to a new topic. At this point, I should have stayed with Holly's willingness to do this one change and help her address just how she might go about this and what barriers she might need to problem solve. My moving to a new topic bypassed solidifying her commitment. Listen to how Holly responds.*

Cole: And then what about the milk? What percent milk is she drinking?

Holly: Well, we do the whole milk.

Cole: Okay.

Holly: I guess I probably shouldn't be doing that.

Commentary: *I imagine Holly is saying to herself, "I'm going to get criticized again." At this point, I might have done better to ask Holly if she really wanted to talk about the milk, since she has agreed to one change already. This would have supported autonomy and kept us more in partnership.*

Cole: What are you thinking about that?

Holly: Well, I don't like the taste of the skim milk, and I don't think she will either. I don't know. Two percent—I could try that.

Cole: Okay. Certainly, dropping down from the whole milk to something like two percent. And then, I know I'm hitting you with all the recommendations, but it's recommended that a child have throughout the day maybe three to four, like, six ounces of milk. So we're looking at, during the day, maybe about 24 ounces of milk altogether.

Holly: Three to four six-ounces of milk. Okay.

Cole: Yeah, and it sounds like that would be not a whole lot different than what you're doing now.

Holly: Yeah, I don't think that's like the juice. I think that's more like what we're doing; so that's good.

Cole: Yeah, so it's really more a matter of the dropping back, going from whole milk down to a two-percent milk.

Holly: Do you think it would make a difference if I mixed whole milk and two percent? I'm still trying to get that taste in there.

Cole: Yeah, I think any change that you can make would be a good change. My recommendation would be just to try to shift down to the two percent. But, again, it's your life, and you have to make changes that are not going to just create all kinds of craziness in your family, too.

Holly: Right.

Commentary: *Note how I affirm her and reinforce her autonomy.*

Cole: I want this to meet the goal with Katie's health and, at the same time, not make your life too weird about it.

Holly: Right, right.

Cole: Yeah, so what do you think?

Holly: I just think maybe at the beginning, like with the juice I could just buy both the whole and the two percent. And just mix them. And then maybe just gradually—

Cole: I want you to come out of here with some ideas and some things you can try without upending your whole life. So I'll let you decide on that. We can talk about what she eats during the day, or you can say, "This is way enough for me today."

Commentary: *It would have been more effective to not add another topic. Holly has made a commitment to a plan and I should have affirmed that and ended the interview. It is easy for the counselor to become overly determined to cover all the topics out of some urgency. A good rule is to elicit from the client whether she wants to address anything else, or if what we have discussed or agreed on already is enough. If, in addition, I carefully listen, not only to the words that the client says, but how she says them, or just engage her by directly asking, I can know when to stop.*

Holly: Well, if you think that making those changes will help with the situation.

Cole: I think those are great places to start.

Holly: Then I'll probably just try those.

Cole: That's very reasonable. Because, again, also with children, making lots of changes at once and particularly for a three-year-old who really wants the world to be the way she wants it to be.

Holly: She's very strong. Strong willed.

Cole: Yeah, so making small changes, and then over time looking at other—yeah. And you and I are going to be meeting together in a couple months anyway because Jack's heading toward one and then we'll be doing his checkup. So we'll have an opportunity to check in at that point. Anything else before we finish today?

Holly: I don't think so.

Cole: Okay.

Holly: Anything else for me?

Cole: No, I think that's it. Again, it seems reasonable. And yeah, we'll get a chance to follow up.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: Actually, there is one thing just before we leave. Rather than going through all of the information about what she eats and all today, I thought that before you left, I could just give you this pamphlet that we have that talks about what kids might be eating at three—what kinds of things you're hoping that they'll get in, in terms of fruits and vegetables and those kinds of things during the day. And it can just give you some idea.

Holly: Okay.

Cole: And then from there, you can take a look at that, and if you want to talk about it some more in the future, we can certainly do that.

Holly: Okay, sure.

Cole: So I'll just give you that before we finish today.

Holly: Okay, I appreciate it.

Cole: And then I'll see you in a couple of months for Jack's check in, and I'll look forward to that.

Holly: Okay, me, too.

Cole: Okay, great.

Holly: I appreciate it.

Cole: Thank you.

Holly: Thanks.

DEBRIEF

Yalom: As we discussed before, she did get a little defensive. You didn't criticize her, but it's just so hard for any parent not to feel criticized.

Cole: Exactly. Any parent would feel criticized. And I also pushed at lot at Holly here. I tried to accomplish a lot in one session with her. So she had to feel criticized. I kept bringing up more things for her to look at in relationship to her daughter and her weight.

Yalom: So if in the middle of the session, you notice that "righting refl ex," in a sense, or that you're overwhelming her with information, what should you do?

Cole: That's a very good question. The fi rst thing is that I got really ambitious here. And I was not paying as much attention to Holly as I could have. As I listened and watched this again, I could see that there were indications that, once we had talked about the juice, and Holly had been willing to make some changes there, in an area where her daughter is passionate about her juice, that when I brought up the next topic, Holly went along with me but there was not much excitement on her part, by any means. She was just kind of like, "Okay. We'll go along with this, as well."

Yalom: So you're really listening to the—

Cole: I should have paid attention to how I was experiencing her and seeing her. She really shifted in terms of her more engaged stance with me. And her speech just became kind of fl at, just kind of going along with me. And at that point, I should have just noticed that and I could have easily backed off. And I would have just said, "I realize that

we've accomplished enough for one day. For you to make one change with a child of Katy's age is plenty. It's enough of a challenge in and of itself. Let's talk together the next time about how that went and then, if you want to look at some other areas, we can do that." I would have recognized and come right back over to partnership and autonomy and collaboration with her.

Yalom: Now, general counselors, or those trained in psychotherapy, are used to tuning in more to what we call process variables, tone of voice, body language, whereas, I'm a psychologist, myself, so I don't know if those in nursing or nutrition, dietician, are used to tuning into that.

Cole: Well, I don't know that they're not accustomed to—I don't know that they don't tune in. I think they do. I don't know if they're trained to tune in quite the same way.

Yalom: Or doctors—some have good bedside manner, but it's not necessarily something they are trained to do.

Cole: Right. But I think what happens in situations with nutritionists, dieticians, people who are in the particular area of work, is that they often feel very pressed to accomplish everything and to cover everything.

Yalom: Especially, in a case like this, you may not see her again for another year.

Cole: Exactly. So I want to get everything done at once. So that's often what drives us. But I have to say that even psychotherapists can become too ambitious, as well. And they can get ahead of their clients. We have to always be very attuned to what is happening with the client.

In Motivational Interviewing, we want to create a certain amount of tension around change, and we want to interact with the client so that we're helping them edge toward addressing the possibility of change, but we don't want to get too far ahead of them. It's very strategic, these little baby steps forward that we have to take.

Yalom: Well, that's interesting. I haven't heard that before—this tension. It's not just passively repeating back what they're saying.

Cole: Absolutely. It's very strategic. We try to keep the tension on there. Not in a bad way, but we want people to have the opportunity to fully explore whether they want to make a change or whether they can make a change. It's my job to provide that opportunity.

Yalom: Great.

FRED: ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Yalom: Now, we're on the final vignette in this video. And here you are in the role of a high school counselor. You're very versatile in your skills.

Cole: Thanks.

Yalom: In this session, you're working with Fred, a high school student. He's not sure if he wants to complete his senior year and graduate. And a lot of the work is really helping envision his future, with or without graduating. I know that's an important technique used in Motivational Interviewing. Can you say a bit about that and why you focus on that so much here?

Cole: Yes. Exactly. In this situation, Fred is so focused on his current angst. He's miserable and really struggling with that misery, and thinking that the way to resolve that misery is not finish high school. So he basically is not seeing the forest for the trees. Envisioning allows us to look beyond the current moment and to look out into the future and to see how this particular decision that we're considering now might affect what we really want for ourselves, out in the future. That's why I think it's a very important technique to use for Fred. Because dropping out of high school at this time in his life can severely impact what's he's wanting for himself in the future.

Yalom: One of the things we'll see you do is help him envision his life sticking it out and graduating, and conversely, not doing so.

Cole: Absolutely.

Yalom: One other thing I noticed, he rambled a lot. Sometimes I didn't even know what he was talking about. What was your experience?

Cole: I had some of that same experience. There were times when I

was just not quite clear where Fred was going or what he really meant. And those times, I just relied on reflecting back to him what I was currently understanding, and just allowing Fred to continue to talk, because he really was clarifying for himself. That's what's happening with the client. The client is actually beginning to take what has been boiling around in the brain and expressing that out loud. So the client is beginning to illuminate his own thoughts in this particular situation, and I'm just there as a conduit. So the use of reflection really allows Fred to continue to expand. And as he expands, I start to understand more.

Yalom: Okay.

Cole: It requires a lot of patience, a lot of patience. It would have been seductive to just move in there and start to ask a lot of very specific questions about this to try to structure it. But that was not going to meet the goal of Fred really exploring this.

Yalom: Or, "I don't understand what you're saying. Can you—"

Cole: That would have been me taking charge of the interview, and having Fred go in the direction that I wanted him to go, rather than me allowing him to explore this on his own, through his own thinking. And that's what the reflections are intended to do.

Yalom: And that might have shut him down.

Cole: Shut him down, exactly.

Yalom: One of the things that he kept saying is how important and helpful it was just to have someone to listen to him.

Cole: Exactly. He is accustomed to the adults lecturing and telling him what to learn, what to think, what to do. And he's saying, "I need to start doing this for myself. I need somebody to listen to me."

Yalom: Okay. Let's take a look at your work with Fred.

Cole: Okay.

FRED SESSION

Cole: Fred, thanks for stopping by today in the office. I wanted to see you because I was going through all the class schedules for next year

and I didn't have yours, so I wanted to check in with you.

Commentary: *I start with focusing or agenda setting. All settings need to have the focus established in order for there to be a clear direction for the conversation. In this case, I am establishing the agenda, as I invited Fred to the interview. Had he come in on his own, I would have elicited from him what he wanted to talk about.*

Fred: Well, lately things in my life haven't been going as good as I planned them to for this year, so I really haven't been thinking about going back to school for my senior year. It's just something I didn't have my heart set on.

Cole: Oh, so you're trying to decide whether you're going to stay in school or not.

Fred: Basically.

Cole: Okay. Well, tell me a little bit about what's going on.

Fred: I'm having troubles at home. Parents coming down on me hard about school. And it's just a lot of barriers that are feeling like—I'm not fitting in in school and friends not accepting me. It's just a lot of peer pressure and different things going on that I just don't feel as if school is for me this year.

Cole: Okay, wow. I'm sorry to hear that. That seems like a lot's happening that's making you not feel so good these days.

Fred: It's just nowadays growing up in this society, like in my school, for instance, you go through so much with different teenagers, and you see that different times, you're going to be cut off from different people. And the people in my school thinking it's your senior year, you think you're supposed to have fun. You're supposed to enjoy yourself, but it just feels like everything is opposite. It's the harmful way and people aren't accepting you as much because you're different. So that's why I really haven't submitted my school schedule.

Cole: Yeah, so, you had some real excitement about what it would be like to be a senior and moving into your final year and having fun, and you're feeling left out.

Fred: Now, yeah. In ninth grade and through eleventh grade, it was

just like, “I cannot wait to get to senior year.” But now after looking back on everything and seeing how everything’s unfolding before my eyes, it’s just like, was it worth it all to get here and not want to go back?

Cole: Wow. What’s your idea about the biggest thing that’s changed?

Commentary: *I could have shifted this question to a reflection such as, “There have been some big changes that are leaving you confused.”*

My open question was no problem, but if I wanted a higher ratio of reflections to questions, then the reflection would have been better. In Motivational Interviewing, we are striving for more reflections than questions, generally by a 2:1 ratio. The reasons are to keep the client setting the agenda for the conversation, to demonstrate understanding and get to see if we are actually understanding it, to capture deeper meaning the client conveys, and to reinforce change talk.

In this case, the reflection would have captured Fred’s emotional response.

Fred: My idea about the biggest things that changed is, basically, attitudes towards me and towards my friends, as a whole. Like people always say high school changes people, and high school changes things for the better. But, like I said, it feels like everything’s changed for the worse, because now that I stand out and I’m a different person. I’m looked at different, and I’m not accepted because of the things I do in my life. And when I exclude myself from different situations because I’m having trouble at home, people start to think negative thoughts about me. And I feel as if I’m not accepted as I should be. And growing up is hard nowadays because you don’t get all the casualties of being as safe as you normally would.

Cole: Mm-hmm.

Fred: So you feel left out and you feel as if you have nobody to turn to. So this year I really wasn’t planning on coming back because of that.

Cole: Okay, wow. Well, of course, you know that as a high school counselor I think ought to graduate from school. You know that.

And, at the same time, I don’t want to sit here and try to beat you up

into something. That's not my goal. I'm trying to get a sense of what would be the most helpful for you right now as we're talking for a little bit.

Commentary: *I do not have a clear sense of what would be helpful, so I ask Fred for direction. This is usually a safe strategy when you're not clear about where to go next or not sure how the client wants to proceed. You never have to be in the dark. You just have to ask. If the client happens to say, "I don't know," with permission, you can offer possible ways to proceed.*

Fred: Well, me, I'm the type of person who, as long as I can count on somebody to have somebody to talk to whenever I'm going through a situation, it helps me a lot because it helps me get a lot of things off my chest. Because I notice at times where there are situations where I just can't talk to my parents.

And I notice that when I'm talking to somebody else, I allow myself to open up more, and I allow myself to be more talkative and more communicative with other people rather than with my parents because sometimes they don't understand where I'm coming from. So if I'm talking to somebody else, then it would help me more. So counseling may be a factor that will help me.

Cole: So, actually, you and I talking some can be helpful to you.

Fred: It could be.

Commentary: *Fred is telling me what would help and I am underscoring this, reinforcing his plan to help him figure this out.*

Cole: Yeah, could be helpful to you, okay.

Fred: In school, we always learn about different things, and we learn about how you should change for the better, and you grow up, and different things. And it seems like high school is just like a big dream. Like, you dream that something is going to happen for the best. But the bad thing about a dream to me is you got to wake up. And it might not be a reality.

Therefore, when you go through different things in life, it's just harder to accept different things because you haven't been put through that

situation, so you find yourself facing different barriers and different downholes that will try to pull you back. So just having somebody like you and I communicating with one another does help. Because it helps me to enlighten my thoughts, and it helps me to expand my horizons in different things, and try to venture out and do different things because you can help me as well as I can help you.

Cole: Okay.

Fred: You know, we can communicate on different things because some of the stuff I'm going through you've probably been through before.

Cole: Mm-hmm.

Fred: Therefore, you could help me in different things.

Cole: Okay.

Fred: That's just the sad part. Like, all the dreams have to become reality sometime.

Cole: It's hard to kind of step out there into reality and, also, as you're stepping toward really becoming a young adult soon, life can give you some hard stuff to look at.

Commentary: *I use a paraphrase reflection to cast the issue in a different light. A paraphrase takes what the client says and stays with the truth of the content, but with a shift of adding meaning. I have not said much all along because as long as the client is speaking and maintaining the focus of the conversation, it is my job to listen and then to reflect, to capture the essence of what has been said. Note that I used a very few words to reflect and went to a very concise reflection.*

Fred: But I really don't think I've told anybody about not going back to school, because it's been a thought that's been on my mind for quite some time now. And when you think about going back to high school and going for your last year and you dream about going to college, but I understand that you can't go to college without a senior year. But is it worth it all going to college and going through the pain, the punishment and struggle of 12th grade?

Cole: Okay. I'm really curious if you're comfortable telling me about

it, as to what it is that you feel like there is about you and how kids are reacting to you, what this pain and the struggle is going to be. What is that?

Commentary: *I ask this open question to expand my understanding by having Fred articulate what he is thinking.*

Fred: The whole situation evolves around my walk, how I walk, how I talk, because I'm one of those type of people who always dares to be different. I want to be somebody that stands out, somebody that isn't just like everybody else, because I have to find me for me, and I have to find my own path. And when it comes down to it they're not going to always be there for me. I'm going to have to find me for myself. Therefore, it's just so much things is going on at home. At home you just have parents beating down on me about grades and different things. My grades are high, but they're not as high as they could be. And it's because I'm not fully focused in different things because of the thought of what am I going to do during senior year, considering the fact that I'm not being accepted?

Cole: Okay.

Fred: So I'd rather go through senior year with somebody that will help me into growing to become what I can be in the future, since people do see that everyone has potential to become something.

Cole: Okay.

Fred: So if I had somebody to talk to like yourself, then that would help. At home it just feels like a blur. I'm confused. I don't know what really to do.

Cole: Okay. Well, let's see how we can use some of this kind of remaining time together today, because it sounds like you and I would be talking together maybe more than once. Let's see what we can do with that some today. One curiosity I have, if you'd be interesting in talking about it, is what are your goals for yourself for the future, taking this senior thing off the table? What are your goals for you?

Commentary: *I felt like it was time to add more focus. Fred is clearly confused and at sea about his future, and adding some direction could help him evaluate his current choice.*

Fred: Well, growing up my parents always said that you should have something that you want to do. And with me, since I was a kid I've always wanted to, coming up I've always been in church. I always to become a preacher or minister or something like that. My parents always told me that there's always going to be people who don't believe in your dream. And at times when they're beating down on me, it feels like they're the people they were talking about in the first place. And so growing up trying to become a minister, so many different things are thrown your way as a test. And some of those tests are just like Spanish. Sometimes you just don't understand every word, because they're not in direct order.

Cole: Mm-hmm.

Fred: Therefore, I want to go this way, but I'm being pushed the opposite. So that's some of the reasons.

Cole: When you say being pushed the opposite, I don't quite understand that.

Fred: Basically what I'm saying is I want to go the right way, but it seems like the more and more I'm fussed at and I'm pushed down and beaten down by different things, I'm being pushed the opposite way. I'm being pushed farther away from my dream.

Cole: Okay, so I'm hearing, when you say pushed away from your dream, that you're starting to maybe consider acting in some ways in your own behavior that wouldn't be consistent with your dream. That's kind of the sense I'm getting.

Fred: Mm-hmm, because when you look at it, after a while, when something starts continuously happening in your life, after a while it does take a toll on you. And you're going to have to face the fact that you're going to change as a person. And it's going to be there for the rest of your life. You're never going to forget it. You maybe forgive it, forgive the situation, but you'll never forget it. And sooner or later it's going to take its toll on you. You always grow up to become something. And when I said I wanted to grow up and become a minister it seemed like, at that very moment, different things started to happen in my life that told me that that may not be an option.

Growing up in school and throughout high school and people saying, “Oh, you’ll never make it and you’ll never amount to anything”—that’s another struggle that I deal with. That’s why I don’t really know if the senior year is for me.

Because if I have to go through another year of agony dealing with people telling me, “You’ll never amount to anything. You’re nothing,” then is it worth all the pain to grow up to be this minister? Is it worth all the punishment? It’s just a big blur. Is it worth it all?

Cole: Yeah, so it feels to you like there’s not really anybody out there that’s on your side that’s saying that you can do this, that you really can do this. Kind of out there alone on this.

Commentary: *I am forming my hypothesis about what I think Fred means and doing a reflection to test it out, to see if I am getting it right. The ultimate goal is for Fred to consider if this is what he means.*

Fred: My parents—I’m not taking anything from them. They’re good people. They really are. It’s just, at times, when you look at the situation—because they don’t go to church as much as I do. Therefore, they’re not as much into my dream as I am. And when you have a dream, you have to find your dream for yourself. But, like I said before, when you dream, it has to become a reality. Therefore, I feel as if it’s my job to make my dream a reality, and make it come true. But when you look at the situation at hand, when you have so many people telling you that it’s not going to amount to anything and that you’re nothing, you begin to wonder because, like I said, it does take a toll on you. You begin to wonder, “Is it really what’s for me?”

Cole: Yeah. Well, let’s take a step over here for a second and have you tell me about you. You have a belief, even though it’s flickering a little bit in there. You’ve got a belief in yourself that you can, it sounds like, do whatever you decide you would like to do.

Commentary: *I am using an affirmation, a recognition of personal strength. Fred has been communicating his discouragement, and now he is talking in a more appreciative way about himself. This affirmation can be a boost in his addressing his confidence to sort this out to make the best decision.*

Cole: And right now, what you've decided is being a minister is a really important thing for you. Tell me about what you believe in about yourself that says, "Despite all these other people maybe saying, 'No, you can't do this,' that I can do it."

Commentary: *And now, an open question is intended to have Fred reflect on his own capability. I sense confidence is an issue here, and I want to address it.*

Fred: Well, growing up, since my dad he was in the church, but he wasn't in the church as much, we always lived by one scripture. And it says in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me." Therefore, just through that I try to press my way forth and try to get through my situation. So I believe I can do it because I know I have a purpose.

And growing up, you have to have a purpose. You have to find yourself. And it may not always just flash up right in your face. It may take some time. So, with me, if it took me, as a young boy at about the age of six, if it took me at least those six years to find what I wanted to be and find my purpose that I should do, then I thought to myself all the time, and I still do think to myself, "Maybe this is what's for me. And maybe I should press forward." But even though in the times of storm there's still those things in the back of my mind that cause me to wonder, "Is it what really is for me?"

Commentary: *I notice some change talk and note how I capitalize on this next.*

Cole: Okay. So this is a long-term goal for you, and one of the things that really strengthens you is your faith, is your belief in this one particular part of the scripture and, certainly, I imagine other parts that really sustain you, that keep you going. So I'm wondering because we'll talk a little bit more today, but then certainly we do have the opportunity to talk more, if you don't finish your senior year, either here or in some kind of alternative program that could allow you to get that degree—if you don't do that, how do you see that affecting this dream and desire you have to be a minister?

Commentary: *I am asking Fred to envision his future and look ahead.*

This is one method of eliciting change talk that is well adapted to a situation where the client seems not to be connecting his choice to its future impact.

Fred: Well, I see it affecting it in a lot of ways. And that's why I'm really hesitant in my decision on me not going back. Because when you look at it, as I graduate, as you apply for different scholarships, you go through school and you have to find something you want to do in school. And then I'll go back for divinity. Therefore, it's like high school make a big difference on whether I can make it through or not. Because my senior year is supposed to be fun, but it's also a challenge. Because you're getting ready for your next step in life. This is one of the reasons why I'm really hesitant on whether I'm going to go back or not, because I see that in your senior year you're going to be put through different trials and you're going to be put through different obstacles. And through that, you're going to see that it's all just a test and it's building you up. And it's going to break you down and build you back up to where you need to be. And so you can grow from different situations and so you can forgive and forget, and won't let it happen again.

Cole: I hear that, for sure you're not certain about this thing. You're not certain this is the right decision. You don't want to do anything that would get in the way of you being able to move into the next phase of education that would eventually let you get that divinity degree and fill this dream that you have.

Commentary: *I am reinforcing Fred's change talk, although he is still uncertain, by reinforcing his goals for the future.*

Cole: So, for that reason, you're not certain that actually not finishing your senior year is a good idea.

Fred: Mm-hmm, like, I'm not certain about finishing my senior year because I do, but then again I don't. Because, like I said, I want to finish because it's going to lead me into going to become a minister in my school studies. And then again I don't want to finish it, because I'm still wondering, is it going to be worth it in the long run?

Cole: Okay. Is it going to be worth it to go through some of the things

that I am pretty certain are going to be painful for me in this next year? Is it going to be worth it to get through that in order to be able to get to that next step?

Fred: People always tell me that I'm not going to make it, but you always have those certain few that says you can do it. So, thinking about that, I know counselors, they help you. But I like counselors that are honest and that are going to tell me what I need to hear rather than what I want to hear. Therefore, if this is for me, it's for me. I'll be there. But sometimes I just wonder whether I'm saying that it's for me or if it's not, because sometimes you'll get signs that tell you that it is or if it isn't. But my vision right now, what I want to do is just so blurry I can't depict two different pictures apart.

Cole: Got you. I'm wondering if you're asking me for some feedback about this.

Fred: Mm-hmm.

Cole: Well, putting aside my hat as a high school counselor, which is hard to do, but at the same time, somehow it would seem to me that if you made this decision just to not finish school, I don't know, I get the sense that you would be kind of then just really floundering. There wouldn't be any foundation for you to be standing on and any way for you to really know how to go forward with that dream. Because you and I both know you have to have a high school degree, as you say, to get to that next step.

So that's one piece, but the other piece feels like you would then really be at sea. And I'm wondering, because you seem very willing and eager to keep having some conversation about this, I'm wondering if we could make some agreement to continue to meet and find some way for you to hang in with school so that you can start moving toward that next area, and then give you a sounding board to sort out—it sounds like there's a lot of stuff going on in here that you'd like to sort out.

Commentary: *Several times, Fred has talked about the value of being able to have a sounding board. So I ask if I can give him some feedback, nonjudgmentally, and then pose an option to pick up on his stated desire*

to have someone to talk with.

Fred: There's just so many thoughts in my head. I really want to go through senior year, in a way, because I'll keep wondering whether I'm going to think back in the long run, and I don't want to live in a life of regret because I didn't do it, and living by the saying, "Shoulda coulda woulda, but you didn't."

Commentary: *Fred is now talking about reasons, not exactly moving to his personal need, but closer than when he started. He has not made those reasons personally relevant yet.*

Fred: It's always times where I wonder should I do it or should I not do it. But I don't want to live in regret.

Cole: Right, so you don't want to be fi ve, ten years out, whatever that might be, and take a look back and say, "If I had just fi nished my senior year, then..." So that's one thing that really keeps you more on the side of, "Let's see if I can hang here and fi gure this thing out."

Fred: Mm-hmm. That's what helps me. It's my drive, my motivation. And it's a tool that's there when no one else is.

Cole: Got you.

Fred: And some people I talk to, they always believe that it has to be a physical being you can touch to be there to talk to. But if you just rely on your level of mentality and grow up in yourself and understand that you may have to talk to yourself to help yourself sometimes, and wonder whether, in your head, are you making the right choice. So with me, I feel as if all the time—I'm not crazy, I talk to myself.

Cole: Sure.

Fred: But it helps me to understand myself more. And people might not understand that when I talk to them, but it helps me to understand and picture out different thoughts. And when you look at the situation that's at hand, you see that everything starts to unfold in front of your eyes, and you start to see things in a different light. Because growing up, your level of mentality changes. Therefore, you start to become more knowledgeable, and you have a greater outlook on different situations.

So when I think to myself and I talk to myself, it helps me understand what I'm doing as a person to help myself in the future. I may just say, "Fred, what are you doing?"

Cole: What are you doing?

Fred: And just think to myself, and that question will be in my mind. I really haven't told my parents about not going back to school, because I have one of those times where I'm, like, "What they don't know won't hurt them." And it's at times where I find myself planning out, "Well, I could act like I'm going to school this morning and I could come back home before they get home, and just erase the message when the school calls and said I wasn't there."

Cole: Right, saying, "Where are you?" So you thought a lot about what you would do to pull off not going back to school.

Fred: Mm-hmm.

Cole: And I'm also hearing you say that you'd like to spend some time figuring out what I could do to stay in school.

Commentary: *I keep picking up on Fred's change talk and his statement of a goal of continuing to talk to figure this out.*

Fred: Mm-hmm.

Cole: Okay. Well, our time's getting close today. And I really appreciate how open you've been with me about this. And I'm wondering how you'd like to leave this in terms of our continuing to talk about this?

Fred: Well, I do thank you a lot because it's allowed me to lift a lot of barriers off my shoulders. And it allowed me to get a lot of stress off my chest that I can probably make it and I can do some different things. And I would enjoy continuing to talk with you, even if it's, like, if I go back to school, it's during school or after school or before school or when I need to talk to you, you can be there as a helping hand.

Cole: Absolutely.

Fred: So I want to thank you for allowing me to talk to you at this time because it has helped me in different aspects of my life and in reasoning out what I should do in my future.

Cole: Okay. Well, I would be happy to continue to see you. And I can work it out for your life before school, after school, I know sometimes you have breaks and stuff. We can work that out. It's obvious that my point of view would be that hanging in through that senior year is to your benefit, and for you not to look out there with regrets down the line. I can't make you, and wouldn't want to make you do anything, but I'd love to be on your side about this and to continue talking with you about it.

Fred: And this has helped a lot. I think I'm going to go home, and I may just sit down and talk to my parents, even though they may not accept it as well, I'm going to still just try.

Commentary: *Fred comes up with a next step. I want to reinforce his capability of making his own informed decision to support his autonomy. In a follow-up session, I would ask him what happened when he talked with his parents.*

Fred: So this has helped me, and I would like to thank you a lot.

Cole: You're welcome, and I look forward to seeing you again.

Fred: All righty then.

Cole: Great.

Fred: Thank you.

Cole: Thanks, Fred.

DEBRIEF

Yalom: Well, that was really a nice conversation the two of you had. I think you did a really nice job of just engaging him.

Cole: I felt so, too. Again, Fred, delightful young man, clearly very much at sea. And the engaging part, being totally focused on him, really allowing our relationship to develop was a very, very critical part of my work with Fred, to really just be with him on this path. And I could feel his distress. I could see how hard this was for him.

Yalom: So you naturally connected with him.

Cole: Yeah, I felt very connected to him.

Yalom: And of course, that doesn't always happen. There are some

clients we connect with more than others. I think that's something any counselor, healthcare professional has to deal with. Does MI have anything to say about that—about how you are there for clients, ones you like more than others, or?

Cole: I don't think we specifically talk about the ones that we like more than others, but we certainly always reinforce the client-centered nature of this and that our job as the counselor is really to put ourselves to the side. It's not about us. And to work as best we can to fully understand the client's situation. So that engagement, that really working to understand, is always there as a guidepost for us.

Yalom: Generally, the more you understand anyone—there are some people you may find easier than others, but the more you understand someone, then you can be more empathic.

Cole: Exactly. We move to this very compassionate stance. We want the best for the other person, and we're there to help that person decide what is the best for them.

Yalom: Now, in this case, it's a little tricky because you want what's best for them. If you're in a role of a counselor that's maybe an agency or in private practice, you can be more neutral, but in your role, and as you openly acknowledged, you do have a bias. It's your job to help him graduate. So how do you handle that when you have a specific agenda and, yet, you're trying to help the client make a decision for themselves?

Cole: That's a great question, and it's quite a challenge. One of the things I always talk about with Motivational Interviewing is that, to me, it's an incredibly transparent way of working with people. There's no game playing here. It's all very straightforward in many ways. So I'm able to say to Fred, "Of course, you understand that in my job as a high school counselor, I want you to graduate. And at the same time, you have to be the person that makes that decision."

So I can be totally honest in my professional point of view, and at the same time, reinforce his autonomy. And quite honestly, Fred would be very surprised if he thought I was a high school counselor who just, like, "Okay, whatever you want to do is all right." He would walk out of my office. Why would he want to talk with me if I didn't care? He

already knows, coming in the door, I want him to graduate. That's just implied. But it's okay for me to be honest about that, while at the same time, reinforcing his choice and helping him consider that.

CONCLUSION

Yalom: In this video, we've really tackled the issue of increasing importance, and we've seen you working with three very different clients in very different situations. Any final thoughts you have about comparing them, or on this topic of increasing importance?

Cole: Well, they certainly were all unique in what they were presenting in each case. As I think about the three, for me, in the role that I was playing, the second one certainly did present more challenge

for me because there was all of this information that I got focused on wanting to provide. But I think all three of them provided wonderful opportunities for me to use my skill as a counselor to help the client address the issue of importance in a unique way.

Yalom: We know that, once a client feels that it's important for them to make a change, there are still some steps along the way for them to actually make that change. Next, they have to resolve any ambivalence they might have about making that change. And, finally, they have to have confidence to actually make the change. So if our viewers want to deepen their skills in working with Motivational Interviewing, we encourage them to watch the next two videos in this series: *Resolving Ambivalence* and *Building Confidence*.

Thank you so much for spending time today to elucidate this concept of increasing importance in Motivational Interviewing, and demonstrating it with these lively vignettes.

Cole: You're very welcome.

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