

# UTILIZING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES WITH FYE COURSE STUDENTS

**Chris Tankersley, Ph.D.**

**Kent State University**

**Conference on the First-Year Experience**

**February 22, 2016**



# OVERVIEW

- ▶ Introductions
  - ▶ Who I am
  - ▶ Who you are
- ▶ What is Motivational Interviewing?
  - ▶ Background
  - ▶ Components
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing in your work with students
  - ▶ Basics of using Motivational Interviewing
  - ▶ Uses of Motivational Interviewing for practitioners
  - ▶ Strengthening student motivation using Motivational Interviewing
- ▶ Discussion and Questions

# WHO I AM

- ▶ Higher Education Background
  - ▶ Currently working in University Housing
  - ▶ Previous experience in:
    - ▶ Orientation
    - ▶ Admissions
    - ▶ First-Year Experience
    - ▶ Student Activities & Leadership Programs
- ▶ Over 10 years experience teaching FYE courses - Exploratory
- ▶ Ph.D. in Education – Student Development & Leadership Focus
- ▶ Currently teaching in a Higher Education & Student Personnel preparation program

# WHO YOU ARE

- ▶ What functional area do you work in?
  - ▶ Orientation
  - ▶ Admissions
  - ▶ First-Year Experience
  - ▶ Learning Communities
  - ▶ Residence Life
  - ▶ Dean of Students
  - ▶ Other?
- ▶ Why did you select this session to attend this morning?

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ How many of you have heard about the concept of Motivational Interviewing?
- ▶ Do any of you feel you use Motivational Interviewing in your work with students?
- ▶ Do any of you feel you could explain what Motivational Interviewing is to someone else?

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ How many of you have ever worked with a “difficult” student?
- ▶ Have you ever needed to have a hard conversation with a student?
- ▶ Have you ever been caught off-guard when talking with a student about a challenging situation they are facing (academic or social)?

# WHAT IS MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- ▶ William Miller and Stephen Rollnick – Defined Motivational Interviewing as:
  - ▶ “A directive, person-centered (student-centered) counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping people (students) to explore and resolve ambivalence” (Rollnick and Miller, 1995)
  - ▶ “A collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change” (Miller and Rollnick, 2013)

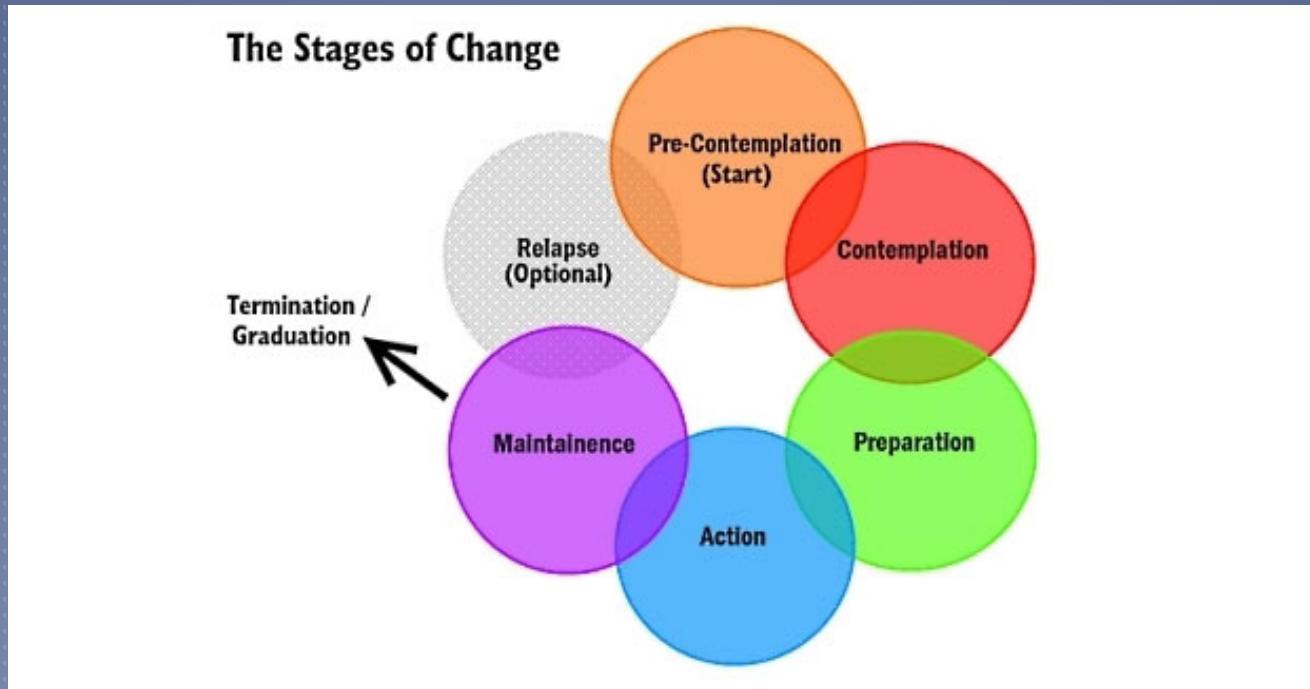
# WHAT IS MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- ▶ Also has been defined as:
  - ▶ “An evidence-based treatment that addresses ambivalence to change” (Center for Evidence-Based Practice, 2015)
  - ▶ “A collaborative, person-centered (student-centered) form of guiding to elicit and strengthen motivation for change” (Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers, 2009)



# WHAT IS MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational Interviewing – Based on the Stages of Change

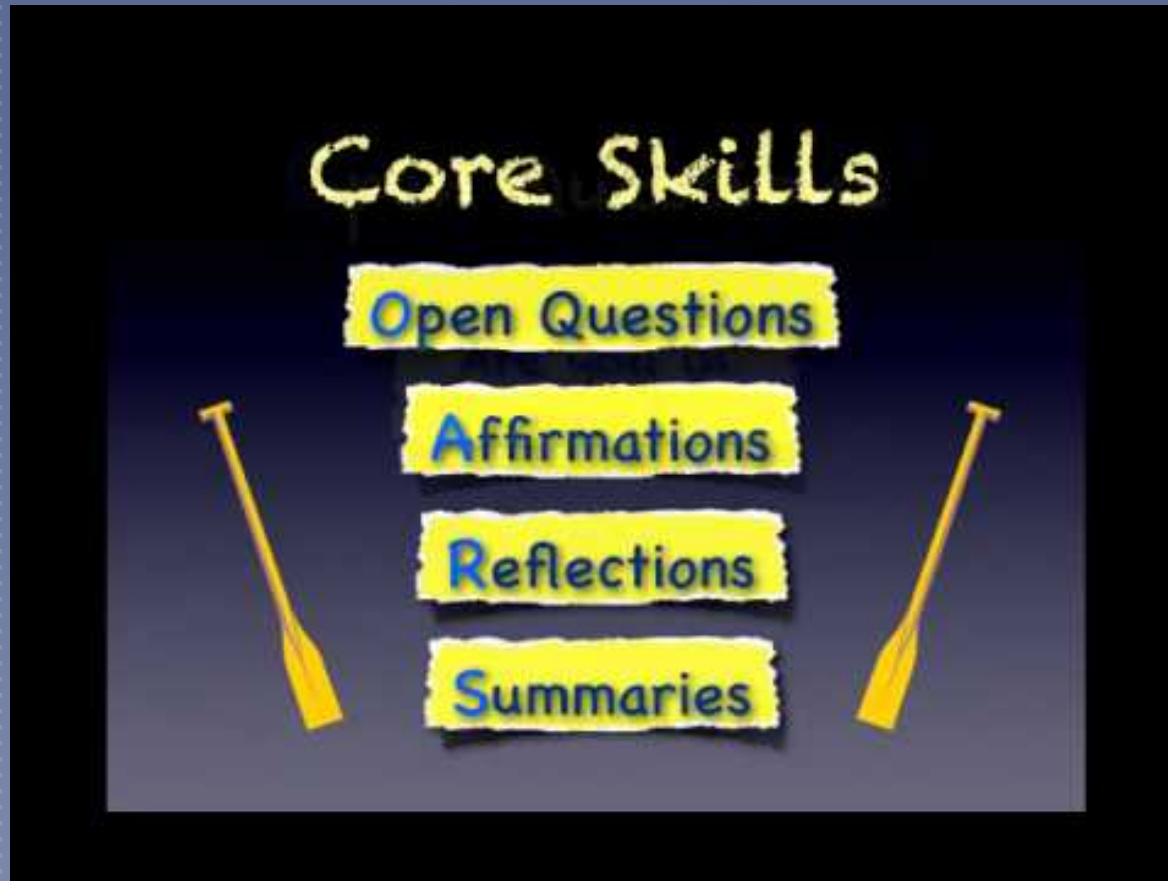


# WHAT IS MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- ▶ Motivational Interviewing assumes that motivation is fluid and can be influenced
- ▶ Is focused and goal oriented – helps resolve ambivalence by increasing the discrepancy between current behaviors and desired goals – while minimizing resistance
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing – the chief goal is to get students to resolve their ambivalence about changing their behavior, without evoking resistance to change

(adapted from Jim Braastad, 2005)

# CORE SKILLS OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING



# OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- ▶ Cannot be answered with a limited response
- ▶ Helps student to investigate and explore their thinking
- ▶ Allows us to avoid immediately offering advice
- ▶ Open-ended questions are the “door-openers” to encourage students to do most of the talking
  - ▶ Students believe what they hear themselves say
  - ▶ Develop discrepancy and reflect self-efficacy

# AFFIRMATIONS

- ▶ Statements that help students acknowledge their positive behaviors and strengths
- ▶ Build confidence for future change
- ▶ Allow for recognition of difficulties and support of strengths
- ▶ Convey respect, understanding, and support for the student

# REFLECTIVE LISTENING

- ▶ Paraphrase what the student says
- ▶ Allows student to know you are listening to them
- ▶ Enables you to ensure you heard the student correctly
- ▶ Deepens the conversation by allowing student to hear again what they shared with you

# SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- ▶ Pulls together everything that was stated by you and the student
- ▶ Allow for a transition to the next topic
- ▶ Ask the student what they learned or got out of the conversation
- ▶ Aids in development of discrepancy for the student



# PRINCIPLES OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

## DEARS: Five Principles of Motivational Interviewing

### *Five Principles of Motivational Interviewing*

- ***D**evelop Discrepancy*
- ***E**xpress Empathy*
- ***A**mplify Ambivalence*
- ***R**oll with Resistance*
- ***S**upport Self-efficacy*



# DEVELOP DISCREPANCY

- ▶ Create a gap between where the student has been (or is currently) and where they want to be
- ▶ Student realizes that current behavior(s) is not leading them towards their goals
- ▶ They become more motivated and open to change

adapted from SMART Recovery

# EXPRESS EMPATHY

- ▶ We need to listen to our students to gain a true understanding of their concerns and reasons for behaving as they do
- ▶ Try to view the world as they do...through their eyes...as they feel it
- ▶ Place yourself in their perspective...reflect on yourself at their age

adapted from SMART Recovery

# AMPLIFY AMBIVALENCE

- ▶ Remember that ambivalence to change is normal
- ▶ It can, however, be paralyzing and cause some people to remain stuck
- ▶ You can help your students acknowledge their ambivalence by discussing it with them and exploring both sides of the issue to help them work through it

adapted from SMART Recovery

# ROLL WITH RESISTANCE

- ▶ Resistance is normal behavior that should be expected from your students as you ask them to change
- ▶ When you tell someone what to do, it is likely to be deemed as confrontational and foster resistance
- ▶ Learn to invite consideration and openness to new perspectives
- ▶ Encourage the student to come up with their own solutions to their situations as THEY define them
- ▶ Allowing personal choice and control over their problems can help minimize resistance

adapted from SMART Recovery

# SUPPORT SELF-EFFICACY

- ▶ A person's belief that change is possible is an important motivator in making change
- ▶ They must believe that change is possible and they are capable of making the changes needed
- ▶ Engage them in conversations that will help them believe that change is both possible and attainable

adapted from SMART Recovery

# USES OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- ▶ Try Motivational Interviewing when:
  - ▶ Interacting with students with potential, but who are stuck in their current pattern of behavior
  - ▶ You hit a roadblock when interacting with a student and all your other techniques are not working
  - ▶ During those moments when you are having a difficult conversation (or series of conversations) with a student
  - ▶ When you desire to have a transformative conversation with a student, but need some aids to get you started

# SUMMARY

## Motivational Interviewing

- ▶ Student-Centered
- ▶ Elicits behavioral change
- ▶ Helps students explore and resolve ambivalence
- ▶ Collaborative conversation style
- ▶ Strengthening student motivation and commitment to change
- ▶ Based on the Stages of Change

# SUMMARY

## Core Skills

- ▶ Open Questions
- ▶ Affirmations
- ▶ Reflections
- ▶ Summaries

## Principles

- ▶ Develop Discrepancy
- ▶ Express Empathy
- ▶ Amplify Ambivalence
- ▶ Roll with Resistance
- ▶ Support Self-efficacy



# DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

# CONTACT INFORMATION

Chris Tankersley, Ph.D.  
Kent State University  
Department of Residence Services  
Korb Hall, 101  
Kent, Ohio 44242  
(330) 672-9147  
[ctankers@kent.edu](mailto:ctankers@kent.edu)