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
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

Core Skills

Open Questions
Affirmations
Reflections
Summaries
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

- Develop Discrepancy
- Express Empathy
- Amplify Ambivalence
- Roll with Resistance
- Support 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
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
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.
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
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