

What MI is Not

Lions and Tigers and Bears MI is an interactive podcast focused on motivational interviewing

Speaker A: CASAT podcast Network.

Speaker C: Welcome to the first episode of the podcast Lions and Tigers and bears MI In this episode, Amy and Paul explore what MI is and what MI is not, how feedback is a large part of practicing MI and more. For episode resources, contact us and other info, visit the Lions and Tigers and Bears MI podcast website at nfartec.org/mipodcast that's nfartec.org/mipodcast

Paul Warren: Lions and Tigers and bears MI an interactive podcast focused on the evidence based practice of motivational interviewing. A method of communication that guides toward behavior change while honoring autonomy.

Amy Shanahan: I'm Amy Shanahan.

Paul Warren: And I'm Paul warren.

Amy Shanahan: We've worked together over the past ten years. We've been facilitating MI learning collaboratives and providing trainings and coaching sessions focused on the adoption and refinement of MI we're also members of the motivational interviewing network of trainers. Join us in this adventure into the forest, where we explore and get

curious about what lies behind the curtain of MI

Paul Warren: Hey Amy.

Amy Shanahan: Hey Paul.

Amy: It's hard to practice motivational interviewing by yourself

Paul Warren: You know, Amy, before we get into our topic for today, which is what am I is not. Tell, tell our listeners, and hopefully there's a few of them out there, tell our listeners, tell our listeners how we sort of hit on this title. And I have to give Amy credit, Amy is the one who came up with this title and it was a gut punch when I heard it because it felt so right. So what's your thought about that, Amy?

Amy Shanahan: Yeah, the Lions and Tigers and Bears

Paul Warren: Am I, am I?

Amy Shanahan: I think that, it came up natural when we were talking about, talking about practicing motivational interviewing and what are people curious about and what were we curious about. And it reminded me of our time together when we started over ten years ago when we were practicing. And I remember sitting there being really nervous and you all seemed to be so good at it, and it was scary. And yet we found a way, just like the characters in the forest in the movie. we locked arms and started practicing and talking and playing around with each other and getting to know each other and we headed off to Oz and we've been still marching along, practicing. So I

think the whole notion of the scariness about it and when you're with somebody that you can practice with, it reduces that fear.

Paul Warren: You know, you're really speaking to one of the things, certainly that I know for myself, but I think the literature also bears this out, is that, it's kind of hard to practice MI by yourself. And the need for supportive, informed communication around your practice is really the way that you can refine what it is you're doing, and gain insight into sort of how effectively you're doing what you'd like to be doing or what you could potentially add to be more effective at what you're doing. And I know for me personally, I've benefited tremendously, certainly from your feedback and from other feedback from people in our coding group and other, people that I speak to about MI M And I wouldn't be in the place I am today, which I'm know I'm a learner. I'm always learning about MI M I wouldn't be where I am on that yellow brick road if it wasn't for the connections and the discussions, about MI

Amy Shanahan: And I think the one thing that is stated in the article, the ten things MI is not, is how deceptively simple it is. And I think that that speaks to it that it takes practice and it's not always that easy.

Paul Warren: Yeah. And, you know, you and I are both trainers and I don't know about you and I'm interested to hear your take on this, but oftentimes when I'm doing an MI training, I'll say to folks kind of in the beginning to try and get a gauge of the room, I'll say, okay, so how many people here are practicing motivational? Currently, everyone in the room will raise their hand and as the training proceeds, what you find out

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Paul Warren: is that actually they think they're practicing motivational interviewing and they're actually not. and that's just where they are in sort of their learning journey with MI M And I think that is what causes people to think at times that m MI is this mysterious kind of thing. And oddly enough, it really isn't.

Amy Shanahan: I've had similar experiences, probably even thought it myself back in the day. Like, I went to a couple workshops on am I, I'm doing it, I'm listening. Well. And I also have experienced people in the workshops after a couple days where we do start to practice, where they realize, even if they raise their hands and said they're doing it, that oh, I need to focus on some things. So they realize early, hopefully in the trainings that they do need to practice some, And it wasn't what they always thought it was right.

Paul Warren: Absolutely.

Some people confuse stages of change model with mi m, which is confusing

And the article, that Miller and Rollinik wrote, the ten things that MI is not, which this conversation is, kind of using that as a jumping off place to talk about a couple of those elements. One of the things I love about that article is it tells us very clearly ten things that MI m is not. And in the course of that discussion, it also tells us what MI is and why some of these things have been confused with MI m. And, the first one, and maybe you've had this experience, too, that seems to be extremely confusing for folks, is that they think the stages of change model, the transtheoretical model of change is M MI or it's part of MI m. I.

Amy Shanahan: Get that a lot, especially in the substance use disorder treatment field. The practitioners that come from that side often, use the stages of change, which, are a model, is a model, evidence based model that started around the same time that MI m did. I could tell you myself prior to about twelve years ago, all of my trainings, because you talked about us being trainers. My materials had the stages of change in my MI trainings a lot. I think I spent more time on the stages of change than I did M MI It was quite confusing. And yet it's distinguished in this article that it's a model of how people go through change. MI M is the way we talk to someone about change. I do get a lot of people that talk about the model itself and think it's m MI And the other thing I have found, too, is that some people will then use the processes or the stages, if you will, and label people in that stage and think that that's where they are or that they're stuck. And so while the stages can be used as a way to identify where someone is, it's also risky because people.

Paul Warren: Think they're stuck in that stage or not, or. And the worker may also think it's my job to move this person to the next stage. And, absolutely. Stages of change model, very popular. Almost everybody knows about the stages of change model. A wonderful way, a wonderful lens to think about the process of change. And MI is really more, is more the method of conversation about that particular.

You cannot be practicing motivational interviewing unless you're practicing client centered counseling

Amy Shanahan: Change, which actually leads to one of the other aspects in the article that talks about person centered or client centered. And I racked my brain for years thinking, how do you distinguish the difference? MI is so very much like person

centered. We read about it. Why is it not right? Why is it not MI m? And you had a thing that you said about it's person centered and you're not using MI m. And could you tell me that it was a absolutely terrible or something?

Paul Warren: Well, it's something that I sometimes share in a training to help people to understand the relationship between client centered counseling and motivational interviewing, and also to distinguish, although they have a relationship, they're two separate things.

Paul Warren: So client centered counseling, you can be practicing that and not be practicing motivational interviewing. You cannot be practicing motivational interviewing unless you're practicing client centered counseling.

Amy Shanahan: Makes sense. So similarly, the stages of change in person centered counseling, while they are not MI m, there's some relationship base to them, and MI has some very distinct

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Amy Shanahan: features.

Paul Warren: MI has some verifiably distinct features from those two. and you know, given that, we thought as we prepared for this conversation, that it might be helpful to review those particular aspects that really constitute the practice of motivational interviewing as a way to differentiate them between a way of thinking about change and anything else that MI m may be confused with. So first and foremost, ah, and this would seem to line up with client centered counseling is that MI is a conversation between two

collaborative partners.

Paul Warren: So the worker is not trying to center themselves. They are a collaborative partner in the conversation where.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah, where client centered or person centered would be a little bit more following. Right. So not side by side like us in the forest.

Paul Warren: Absolutely. And MI is about guiding and guiding a conversation that has a direction which actually speaks to the next component of MI which is that there's an identified behavioral change goal, meaning that the, worker and the client have a conversation and agree on what the change goal, the behavioral change goal for the conversation is going to be. And the worker then helps focus the conversation on that particular change goal. And it's, it's generally a change goal that the client has ambivalence about.

Amy Shanahan: That's a really important one. And I remember when, I don't remember exactly when, but I remember a light bulb going off because I thought MI m was about listening and responding. And it was those things. And it took a while for me to discern that it was specific behavior change goal that someone's ambivalent about, that if they're not ambivalent, they don't have to worry about using MI So in a sense, for the point number three, it's about guiding the conversation to help that person resolve their ambivalence about that behavior change goal.

Paul Warren: Absolutely. And again, it's not necessary, and nobody really has complete resolution of their ambivalence. And through the conversation because it's exploring their ambivalence and resolving it to a degree and identifying their intrinsic motivations,

their desires, their abilities, their reasons and their needs about this particular change and why they're considering it.

Amy Shanahan: So it's about intrinsic motivation, exploring their motivation, not necessarily resolving ambivalence, helping them consider it, and what they might do to strengthen that intrinsic motivation for change if they choose.

Paul Warren: Absolutely. And again, MI The approach with MI of course, first and foremost, is about respecting somebody's autonomy, the idea that the person has autonomy about the change goal they want to pursue and their direction, how they approach that change goal.

Amy m: Motivational interviewing is not for every conversation

Amy Shanahan: So, as we start to wrap up some of this conversation that we're just starting, I know the article, ten things that MI m is not, has, several other aspects that are really. It's a really neat article, and I could say I like it. For those who don't like long articles, it's got short snippets that you could just capture the essence of these things. What are some other things, that you'd like to wrap up the piece about what MI m is not and what MI is?

Paul Warren: You know, we'll spend more time in the podcasts that follow this sort of breaking down in greater detail some of the elements of MI and how to, operationalize those and how to capitalize on them. I guess the biggest thing I'd like people to take away from this conversation is that motivational interviewing is not for every conversation. Simply using an open ended question, an affirmation, a reflection, or a

summary does not constitute the practice of motivational interviewing. Motivational interviewing is not simple, and it's something that requires practice and feedback

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Paul Warren: on that practice. And I guess, lastly, and this is mentioned in the article, that MI is not a technique. It's not sort of a trick that you use to manipulate somebody into doing what you think they should do. It's a method of communication between two equal partners, two collaborating equal partners that has a particular focus on a change goal that the person feels ambivalent about, and also exploring their intrinsic, motivations to achieve that goal.

Amy Shanahan: This whole notion of us exploring M, am I in this way was all about that notion of being curious. And I really enjoyed a time reflecting back on a workshop that I was doing, and one of the participants really hung up on am I not being a technique? And looked up the word and defined it. And I was loving just inviting that conversation in. And I don't know who learned more, me or the person and what came out of it as well, is that MI is not a recipe that you follow, that you could say if you do these things, therefore you are doing MI or being MI as we'd like to say. So it's a heart set as well as a mindset.

Amy Shanahan: And I think one of the other things in the article is it's not easy. So it's deceptively simple. And I think for a lot of these things that we're talking about today and we'll talk about in future podcasts.

Paul Warren: I really value what you just said, amy m because I feel like you really hit on the spirit of the purpose of these podcasts, which is to invite people to engage in an

exploratory conversation about motivational interviewing. Some folks get the idea about MI that it's something to be revered and something that's fragile. And m MI is a very robust ah, strong approach that invites discussion, reflection, conversation, and that's my hope for our future conversations, is that we'll invite people into that conversation, and keep that spirit, of am m I and the curiosity about am I alive?

Amy Shanahan: Yeah, I use the term trying things on when people ask me. And as a trainer, I get that writing reflex kicking in when somebody says, how do I do this? I always want to tell them the answer. And the neat thing about am m I is there's not really a black and white answer all the time. I mean, I could discern the difference between an open and a closed question. but how should I say something to a person who says, xdev, there's no recipe. And that person today might be different for you tomorrow than they are next week because it's a relationship and there's people involved. And all I could say is give it a try and see how it lands or see how it, how the person responds to you when you try something new, if you're trying on a reflection.

Paul Warren: And again, we invite you to send your comments, your questions, your feedback about this conversation in our future conversations. please send that to the web address that will be shared with you. And in addition to suggesting or inviting you to explore the article, the ten things MI is not, we also have another excellent resource we'd like to share, that you can get access to through the mountain Plains addiction technology transfer network. And it's a series of posters which are on motivational interviewing. It's motivational interviewing prompts and reminder posters. I don't know about you, but I'm a visual learner and having something that I can hang in my office or post somewhere and look at has been a wonderful way to remind me of how I want to proceed or the things I want to make sure I include in an MI conversation. So again, we really would invite you to check out these particular posters. even if you decide that you

don't want to download them, check them out again. They're at the, Mountain Plains ATTC, addiction technology transfer Center. And we, look forward to talking with you next time.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah, we hope it sparks some curiosity, this

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Amy Shanahan: podcast and the posters. And we look forward to having some more conversation and hearing from you via the email if you have some curiosity questions.

Paul Warren: Thanks, Amy. It was good to talk to you.

Amy Shanahan: You too, Paul.

Paul Warren: Take care. Bye bye.

Speaker C: Thanks for listening to episode one of Lions and Tigers and Bears MI join us for episode two, where Amy and Paul discuss how MI is deceptively simple Lions and Tigers and Bears MI is hosted by Amy Shanahan and Paul Warren and is produced by staff at, CASAT at the University of Nevada, Reno.

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