

Episode 12- MI Coaching and Feedback

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

CASAT podcast Network in episode twelve, Paul And Amy welcomed guest Billie Jo Smith. A fellow Mindy and MI practitioner. They collectively explore the value of MI coaching and feedback as well as finding. A community of MI mentors. For episode resources, contact us and other information, please visit the Lions and Tigers and Bears MI 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 Hey, Paul.

Paul Warren: Hello, Amy. How are you today?

Amy Shanahan: I'm doing well. You?

Paul Warren: I'm great, thanks.

Billy Jo is our first guest to lions and tigers and bears

And I'm so excited because we have our first guest to Lions and Tigers and Bears. MI

Amy Shanahan: Oh, I'm excited too. It's taking us, back to the beginning. Taking us back to the forest.

Paul Warren: Absolutely. Absolutely. And maybe we should introduce Billie Jo and then explain what we mean by taking us back to the forest.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah. What do you think? Hey, Billie Jo

Billie Jo Smith: Hi, Amy. Hi Paul.

Paul Warren: Hi, Billie

Billie Jo Smith: So much for having me. I'm, excited and honored to be the first guest of Lions and Tigers and Bears. MI

Amy Shanahan: We're so thrilled to have you.

Paul Warren: We are.

Billy Jo: I think motivational interviewing involves meeting other people along the way

Amy Shanahan: So what do you think about the forest, Billie Jo? What does that make, what does that make you think about when we talk about the forest?

Billie Jo Smith: Well, I mean, I think that when we talk about the forest in relation to wizard of Oz and I may be way off track here, but it's part of the journey, right, to get, to the final destination. And if I remember correctly, I think it's one of the scariest, right? So there's a lot of stuff that happens in the woods, including the lion, some very scary monkeys. and for me, when, if I try to put that in terms of motivational interviewing, I think my learning journey sometimes feels like you're in the woods. Right? It's scary. There's things in there. and yet I think we find a lot of value. Dorothy met a lot of really valuable people in the forest, and it was all part of that kind of progression to get where she was trying to go. And so sometimes we just, we can get ourselves a little psyched out by the things that might be in the forest, but it can be so helpful.

Amy Shanahan: Nice, nice articulated summary about how it plays into our MI practice. And in the beginning, I mentioned when we began together, Paul Yu and some others, started practicing together and how I felt scared practicing in front of each other. And then towards the end of the scene, when the characters are leaving the forest, they lock arms, right? They're together. So you said meeting other people along the way, to help you along. It's apropos for our topic today. What do you think, Paul?

Paul Warren: I agree. I think it's absolutely apropos for our topic today, and I really appreciate that. When you and I started having conversations about this podcast, Amy, it really came back to you and brought it back very strongly to me that MI is something that I really took a risk and learned with other people. And like Billie Jo was saying, that was scary at first, and then it sort of got more comfortable after we sort of locked arms and were able to collaborate together.

Billie Jo Smith: Yeah, I think it's that desire. Like, you connect with the ideas and the pieces of motivational interviewing, you start to see how

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Billie Jo Smith: it might work, with the work that we do or even just communicating with people. And, there's this desire to be good. And as Amy mentioned, kind of the fear of sitting in front of your peers and other people and thinking like, oh my gosh, they're so good. Like, how did they know how to say that there, And to allow yourself to be vulnerable to that, those experiences and those coaching moments in order to enhance your own skills along the way, Jeff.

This podcast focuses on coaching and how coaching can enhance and refine skills

Paul Warren: And, you know, that's why we felt, given that this is sort of the conclusion of our second cycle of the podcast, that it would be helpful to have an episode that really focuses on coaching and how coaching, although scary.

Paul Warren: For the coach as well as the coached, can be a really rich opportunity to enhance and refine and really build a, collaborative partnership with somebody or with the learning community.

Amy Shanahan: You know, I'm wondering if each of you have had the experience and, I know we've talked about it in previous episodes about people coming to the trainings that we provide. I'm already doing this. I just want to polish up same thing with maybe the same concept with coaching. People might say, well, I don't really need that. I'm good, I got this. I'm practicing. I've been doing it. And now, I'm just really cognizant that I'm practicing, I'm good. Have you heard that? What do you think about that?

Billie Jo Smith: I think that I've had some of those experiences when I had the opportunity to coach folks. and for some folks, yes, maybe that is accurate. They're utilizing motivational interviewing, already and maybe don't have quite see how the coaching is going to help. and for other folks, they felt like they were using MI maybe they were using pieces, and having the opportunity in that coaching, in those coaching moments to grow those skills or identify ways in which they might be more. Am I consistent? and so creating a safe space, but having a conversation about that with people, I mean, I don't know. Paul, what's your experience been like?

Paul Warren: Very similar. And, I'm going to speak about it from sort of the individual perspective as well as kind of the organizational perspective because similar to you, I've had individuals, and again, I like the way Amy put it, I've had individuals say, like coaching, why do I need coaching? I'm doing am m I. I use open ended questions all the time. And again, I can understand why people think that, because training often emphasizes the core communication skills and it doesn't, necessarily help people to consider the intentionality of the use of those skills and the connection of those skills to

an identified behavioral change goal. I also think organizationally, it's interesting because organizations will be like, well, why do we need coaching? We had people go through a two hour training, and m MI is so simple. Clearly they know what they're doing. And again, I, think it's important to acknowledge that that's the perception that people have and that organizations or administrators have, and to kind of help them to explore that. Actually, motivational interviewing is deceptively simple and far more complex than just executing an open ended question.

Paul Warren: And that really, for anybody who's using it, even somebody who considers themselves or would qualify as proficient using a coding instrument, there's a great benefit to working with a coach or learning community so that you can refine what it is you're doing because it's something that you can work on and grow your whole lifetime using it.

Billie Jo Smith: And Paul, as you speak, it reminds me of a conversation that the three of us were fortunate enough to have with Stephen Rollink. and so I asked him about, you know, what might a practitioner want to focus on as they learn and grow their skills? I was thinking about somebody early to MI M and Steven talked about how it wasn't even just for beginning practitioners, and he disclosed himself as one of the co founders of motivational interviewing, that he was being too clever with it, and he didn't feel as though he was doing, some of his best MI work. And so to be able to kind of scale it back and go back to just this idea of coaching and really kind of taking a look at what it is that we're

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Billie Jo Smith: doing or what we're hearing others do and identify ways that we can

grow particular skills and maybe, you know, areas of growth for us, things that maybe we want to change or consider cutting back on or, and so it was really powerful and moving for me to hear that Steve Rollnick has things that he's still working on. So, yeah, it's, I think it creates, makes the forest a little bit not as scary if we know that Steve Rollnick is also in the forest with us.

Amy Shanahan: You know, we always compare to musicians, and there is a classical musician, I don't remember his name. Maybe Paul, it'll come up with you or Billie Jo that in his eighties he was still practicing. And he said, you know, I think I might get a little better kind of concept. Like, you think this eminent musician no, no longer needs to practice. And very similarly to MI no, I need to continue to practice, just like Steve said.

Paul: When organizations are more involved, there seems to be more momentum

Paul, I'm so happy you brought up the organizational aspect, which I'm anticipating some future episodes, that we could dive deeper into that. And I think about how when organizations are more involved, there seems to be a bit more momentum. And I'm trying to stay focused because it could be such a wide variety of conversations. But really, I remember my boss back in the day when Billie Jo and I were still working together, said, why should I care about motivational interviewing? Why should I attend one of your sessions? And I said, that's really important. It's helpful that you're supporting this initiative that we're doing practicing together. What would be even stronger is if you were a part of it and you too were learning some aspects. I said, at least, it might help you become a better listener. So even the administrative person was wondering, why should she be a part of this or why should she learn about it? And I

also got into deeper conversations about perhaps she can help coach me to be a better practitioner. Really just having that conversation about how it can benefit the organization.

Paul Warren: I often think that a lot of the time, with administrators, clearly their plates are very full, and I think that sometimes they're concerned about, and I'm going to frame it this way, post training activities, such as booster training, such as coaching, such as maybe coding, such as maybe an organizational learning community or a programmatic learning community. I think their concern is the investment of resources, a lot of, and their investment, of the time of the staff. So they think, okay, well, I just spent x amount of dollars to provide this training for the staff and now they should be able to do it and use it, right. And again, I think it's helping folks to understand that it's not that simple. And if you really want your team to be able to effectively employ motivational interviewing when it's appropriate for a behavior change conversation or to adopt an MI spirited approach, it really does require post training support. And yes, that can be an investment, of resources. And ultimately it can pay off in more effective service provision, helping participants, clients, patients reach the goals that they actually set for themselves.

Paul: We wanted to see if motivational interviewing increased follow through rates

Amy Shanahan: It takes me down the path of measuring and data and getting support from the organization around post training coaching. And Billie Jo, I'm, wondering if you remember some things that happened in our organization around collecting data, which eventually the president and CEO said when we showed him that data, why aren't we

doing this everywhere?

Billie Jo Smith: Yeah, it was part of our learning, right. So, as Paul had mentioned, we started out by training the staff in the skills, and then we measured it by creating, MI scripts for different scenarios. So things like individuals coming in for intakes. We wanted to see if the use of motivational interviewing would increase the likelihood that individuals

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Billie Jo Smith: would make it to their second appointment. we also used it measuring as a bridge from an inpatient setting to outpatient, as we knew that the follow through rate there was also, not where we would like it. You know, we want to help connect people. And again, using those motivational interviewing scripts, we're able to measure if we saw a change from the time we started using, MI until, you know, the current moment. We presented the data and as Amy alluded, the answer to it was yes, by working with staff and myself included, I was part of this initiative, measuring proficiency. At the time, we were using the Mia step, as a way to check on the proficiency of our skills and using that as coaching in supervision settings, and then tracking to see if people were, in fact, showing to those follow up appointments. And we did see in that project that the show rates increased and by a good amount. Right. We're talking about potentially 30% or more, of an increase of individuals showing. And Paul, you talk about, you know, the administration wanting that investment, having that kind of data, to say that the use of this as a conversation style is in fact increasing the likelihood that individuals may remain engaged with our program and benefiting from our services.

Billie Jo, could I ask you a question about the instrument that you use

Paul Warren: Billie Jo could I ask you a question about, the instrument that you use, because you mentioned the MIA step.

Billie Jo Smith: Sure.

Paul Warren: And I'm wondering the reason I'm curious about that is because a program that I've worked on, our training and practice implementation institute, we started using Miastep and we found with our practitioners that actually it was too nuanced of an instrument to really support them where they were in their current learning process with motivational interviewing. And we switched actually to coding with the mighty, which uses, of course, the for global measures and the behavior counts. so I'm curious as to what your experience of using me as step was like with your folks.

Billie Jo Smith: Well, I think we had a similar experience, Paul. So for me, as the coach, providing the feedback, I was familiar with the form. I kind of understood those nuances a little bit. to simply provide that to, an individual who was being coached, it did seem a little too much in the weeds. And so one, it affected my coaching style. How could I take the information and make it valuable to the person, that I was coaching and also having a consideration of is this the most appropriate tool for the outcome that we were looking to achieve? And similarly, we moved away from the me a step as well, and moved to the mighty as a coding tool for coaching sessions. but I think it really does come into how the coaching is done, how we have those interactions with the folks that we coach.

Amy, I appreciate how you structured your coaching sessions to

make feedback meaningful

Paul Warren: You know, I'm wondering, given what you just said, if it might be helpful for us to talk a little bit now about sort of the coaching structure in terms of, you know, and again, I really appreciate, you know, how you structured the coaching in order to make the feedback more meaningful to the learner as opposed to them maybe being overwhelmed by 16 codable items. 10:00 a.m. m I congruent. 06:00 a.m. m I incongruent.

Amy Shanahan: Three duplications.

Paul Warren: Yeah. And again, it's a wonderful instrument and maybe more appropriate for people who are further along in their path toward proficiency, and refinement. So I'm wondering maybe if we could talk a little bit about sort, of the style with which, or our thoughts about maybe some of the best practices in terms of being a coach and working with someone who has agreed to open themselves up to having their practice reviewed, perhaps coded and then engage in a conversation about that.

Amy Shanahan: I could start if that's okay. I had the opportunity to work with a group in a rural community in Pennsylvania, and I realized exposing them to the mighty, the instrument I was using

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Amy Shanahan: first and explaining what we were looking for, what we're talking about. And I think the one thing that stands out to me, I believe it's the item. Persuasion is not necessarily a topic that we cover in training. So I thought it was important to talk about

the aspects of things that I would be giving them feedback on and then explicitly letting people know what a coaching session would look like. So, for example, I often, and I would let them know, I will start off by asking you to reflect back on the session, the tape. However, whether it was a live observation or a recorded tape, for you to reflect back on what you noticed, what did you find? What were your strengths? So definitely strength based. And then asking the opportunities question, what would you like to see differently? What might you have done better? Was it something that you missed? Were there questions you have? So really letting them know that that's the way the conversation would flow and then that I would certainly ask permission. If it's okay, I'm going to provide you with my feedback and observations and then end with asking them what they think about it and what do they think they might do next. So, always anchoring it with what they think. A lot of times in my experience, when I do it that way, they often say, as we know from MI m, they have it within them. They often say the things that I'm going to give them feedback for anyway. Not exclusively, not everything, but a lot of things that I wouldn't have to cover. So I just fill in the blanks sometimes.

Billie Jo Smith: And Amy, as you're describing it, I think about the importance of us demonstrating the MI skills in that coaching session. So allowing the individual to explore their needs, their areas of growth, out of the gate, asking them their thoughts, asking for permission to provide any feedback that we might have or thoughts that we might have. And then of course, that last part of the ask, tell, ask, circling back around to say, hey, what did you think about that? Or what are your thoughts? and then even the four processes are coming to mind, you know, as we move through it. Then what's the plan? You know, we get to the end of this coaching session to be able to say, so, based on the things that we talked about today, what do you think some next steps might be for you, for us? Because this is a collaborative process in continuing to grow and benefit from these coaching sessions.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah.

Paul Warren: You know, I really appreciate the practicality of what both of you were saying because, you know, Amy, you made it very clear that you want the person who's going to receive feedback to understand the framework within which they're going to be given feedback and again, helping them to understand that. And again, we're also talking about sort of the parallel process of that. The coaching session really wants to be a modeling of an I congruent interaction? Because again, the behavioral change goal is focusing on improving, refining, acknowledging the strengths of one's current practice.

Paul Warren: And then making a decision about what you're going to focus on going forward.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah. Feedback is so important and I don't know about you two, but in my experience, I don't say this lightly, I'm very passionate about it. I think that there are people that struggle with providing affirmative and critical and strength based feedback in a way that a person can receive it. So, I think maybe it's a cultural thing for me or a historical thing. well, Amy, you were supposed to do this. You didn't do that. why didn't you do this? This is how you can make it better or this is what was right or wrong. So that, that's my mental model, maybe school based kind of stuff. I'm old. People can't see how old I am. But hopefully teachers aren't like that anymore.

Paul Warren: But you have a very young voice though, Amy.

Amy Shanahan: Well, and I just think that some people struggle with giving quality and strength based feedback and I'm very sensitive to that and I'm making a sweeping

generalization.

Paul Warren: You know, I'm struck by

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Paul Warren: that because I would also go out on a limb. Well, maybe it's not really going out on a limb, but I would also add that sometimes those who are open to coaching are invested in focusing on what they think they did wrong.

Amy Shanahan: Wrong.

Paul Warren: And again, I don't think that's necessarily their fault. I think in some ways we associate feedback and quote unquote criticism with something negative. And again, I think the beauty of an effective coaching model is that we start with the strengths because clearly you're bringing some strengths to this particular conversation and that's nothing, that's not trying to sugarcoat something.

Amy Shanahan: Hm.

Paul Warren: We're really looking for strengths and we're also collaboratively exploring growth opportunities, opportunities for refinement. So it's not about what you did wrong or what was bad. And yes, there may be growth opportunities that you'll choose to focus on. And I'll give a concrete example because feedback really has to be specific in order for it to be effective. So, an example sometimes that's come up in coaching sessions that I've had the opportunity to do is folks will rely a lot on questions and the use of questions as opposed to considering reflections and using reflections instead of

questions. And that's a, I love talking about that with somebody who's interested because then we can use it as a collaborative practice opportunity, you know.

Second piece of the opportunities is evoking from the person what they think

Amy Shanahan: And I was thinking about the second piece of the opportunities is evoking from the person what they think. And I think of a specific coaching session where I asked the person I was coaching, what did she notice, as opportunities for her to focus on or to consider. And she brought up her own internal desire to want to persuade the person, excuse me, to do something to better their health, for example. And she said, I just have this overwhelming feeling to want to persuade them. And that was really a focus of her practice for quite some time and it was her choice. And, and I think that that gains a lot of momentum because maybe in my mind I thought, hm, maybe she could benefit from practicing more reflections instead of questions. She chose to focus on reducing her persuasion, her use of persuasion, and we explored how she would consider doing that. What are some things? And then of course I'd use the ask, tell, ask and offer some suggestions. But she was even more invested in her own practice because she knew what was a gap for her and she knew what she wanted to focus on and it was already there within her and she knew where she wanted to go.

Billy Jo: Paul makes a great point about parallel process in coaching

Billie Jo Smith: And one of the things that kind of stands out to me again, goes back to

this idea of the parallel process. I immediately was, struck by something that Paul had said in terms of things being good or bad. And one of the things I think that we try to do when we do trainings is talk about that, the things that we're talking about, it's not, this makes it good, and if you do this, then this is bad, because we can use the skills in whatever way suits the conversation and helps kind of move it through. But really looking at these things might be, am I consistent? And these areas may be more, am I inconsistent? Consistent and how might we be able to bring in some of these things, to make it maybe a little bit more, am I consistent in the conversation versus you did that, and that was not good, that was bad. And so just kind of setting up that structure of the session again to say like we're going to, this is going to be a collaborative process. We're in this together. And it's not about taking an opportunity to point out things that you do bad, but maybe identifying things that you could do to make it more. Am I consistent or to enhance those skills?

Paul Warren: I don't know if either of you have had this experience, and I imagine you have, but I don't want to make that assumption, which is that oftentimes when I'm in a coaching session and I start with strengths, the person will have some sort of reaction to hearing their own strengths

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Paul Warren: or some sort of desire to be like, okay, but I didn't do this, or I didn't do that. And I'm wondering, if you've had that dynamic or if that's played out in any of your sessions.

Billie Jo Smith: Well, if it's okay, I'll talk about my own experience as someone being coached, taking the opportunity to learn, in one of our learning communities, I decided

that it would be a nice opportunity to allow others to listen to one of my taped sessions. I actually picked the one that I used, to apply for the mint, and everybody was going to practice coding, and then we were going to do feedback. And going into it, I remember telling Amy, like, I feel nauseous, like, physically ill, because it was that, that anxiety producing. And, Paul, to your point, as people start to provide lead out with strengths, what's going through my mind is, yeah, but, yeah, but. Because what I heard when I listened to my own tape was, oh, why did I say that there? Or, geez, could you ask, could you have asked another question? Or, wow, you missed that change talk opportunity. And so I find that for myself and maybe others have similar experiences, we tend to be a little bit more critical of ourselves than maybe others would be.

Paul Warren: M. You know, you make yet another great point or argument for the coaching process, because our own self distortion, perhaps, and maybe that's too strong of a way to put it, but our own, or my own, let me keep the focus on myself, my own, resistance to acknowledging, like, well, you know, maybe I did do something effective there. you know, a coach can help me to maybe take that in, in a way, that's going to open me up more than focusing on, like, what I didn't do.

Amy Shanahan: Well, you know, and to your question, in my experience, I think, like Billie Jo said, I've experienced people, especially, that you've been able to work with over time, you find that cadence and that dance that initially, yes, when you provide the strengths there's some yes butting going on, sometimes overtly, not just in their head. And over time, it feels like they're actually open to it. They're open to whatever it is that you see. They feel safer, they feel more comfortable. And I was curious, before you even said that, Billie Jo, about you're feeling a little nauseous. I was going to ask you both about that very thing. When do you recall, if at all, that the transition shifts for you in coaching, getting coached yourself, that you feel comfortable and safe? And I'll

answer my own question right out of the gate. When I had a mentor in the mint plus program, through the motivational interviewing network of trainers, my coach and I, I remember feeling a connection right out of the gate and that was the engaging aspects and it felt more like a partnership than it did a teacher student. And I think that helped me go along and trust the criticism or the areas for strength. Never really felt like a conversation about areas for strength. It was more of, well, I've tried this in the past, or what have you tried? And it was a, collaborative dancing conversation. and that's when I felt most in my stride, being coached and less fearful and anxious.

Billie Jo Smith: I think, for myself, maybe, maybe it's gotten a little easier. And yet still I have a level of anxiety. I feel very blessed to have opportunities to practice and I've met a lot of people through my own interest in growing my skills and being coached. and yet I think there's still a part of me that, because this is so important to me, that I just, I want to be good and I worry. Look, there's that word good. Even though I just said we don't say things are good or bad, somewhere in my brain it's still about being good.

Amy Shanahan: you caught it.

Billie Jo Smith: Yeah, absolutely. And then putting yourself in that vulnerable spot to know that, like, oh, what if I mess up? Because I might, because I probably will, because I'm human. so I think there's still a level of anxiety, but I think it just gets easier over time. I think I've accepted it. Paul, what about, what about you?

Paul Warren: I'm so glad you said that because I don't feel alone now that I still feel some anxiety about it as well. and maybe that's just human nature. the thought that was going through my mind is when I am observed

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Paul Warren: by a colleague I respect, or, I'm letting people that I respect and trust listen to a recording that I've done a little bit of that fraud syndrome comes up for me. I'm sort of like, well, do I really know what I'm doing here? And what are they going to say? And I appreciate what Amy just said a moment ago about the idea of trust, because I've had the opportunity, certainly with both of you and with other folks, that I can sort of trust that no matter what your feedback is going to be that we're colearning together. You may be the coach.

Paul Warren: And you're also learning, and I may be the person who's receiving your coaching. And I'm learning too, and we're learning together. and that, you know, being in that walking side by side partnership helps me to realize that I'm just where I am in my learning process. And Amy is where she is, Billie Jo is where she is. And we're just looking at this together.

Amy Shanahan: And I don't want to be the odd person out to say that I don't ever feel angst. For sure. My imposter syndrome sometimes is bigger than me.

Billie Jo Smith: I do think that Paul, as you talk about it, to point out what Amy said, it's about trust, that collaborative relationship, that locking arms as we're leaving the forest, because we're all learning together and to be able to take the opportunity as someone being coached or as the coach to say, this is a learning opportunity and both of us are in it together. So it's not just you as the one being coached that the heat is on. This is us together in this process. And that can be really helpful. Maybe it wasn't about acceptance, it was about feeling safe.

Paul Warren: M Yeah. And that's feeling safe allows me to be vulnerable.

Amy Shanahan: Right.

Paul Warren: I mean, that's probably the most obvious, you know, concept in the world. And it's, you know, it's a very true and real concept for me in terms of being in the coaching process and being a coach as well, which.

Amy Shanahan: Underscores the importance of a coach modeling the MI when someone is feeling vulnerable and nervous, being able to be compassionate about that and affirming their strengths.

Paul: I was thinking about benefits from coaching and I'm curious

You know, I was curious, I was thinking about benefits from coaching and I'm wondering if you have any instances that stand out because I really like Billie Jo that you highlighted the good bad syndrome, because that helps quiet sometimes my inner critic, because I just want to become more consistent. And I remember one of the benefits that stands out to me is one of my coaches highlighted a habit of mine that I would use the phrase get people to do something so much that I didn't even realize I was using the phrase. And I said, I don't want to get people to do anything. Why are you giving me that feedback? He said, you just said it. I said, I did. Like, I didn't even hear myself use that phrase. And then on the positive side, hearing people catch and give feedback back to what positive habits they hear about, you know, me observing body language, that. That's a, I never even got feedback like that before, or a coach that gave me feedback about my cadence, in my tone of voice at the time or throughout the

recording. So I'm, just curious what. What stands out to you is having been beneficial feedback that you've gotten. And, you know, either way.

Billie Jo Smith: I think for me, similar to your experience, Amy, is m one of the benefits is maybe drawing attention to things I didn't realize that I was doing or happen. and one of the folks that I received, maybe the feedback from was cheerleading. You know, I really wanted to be strength based, point, out strengths, affirm positive things. and there was a way that I could do that in a more am I efficient? Way. However, at the time, I thought, like, yeah, this is great, and probably didn't realize what I was doing or to the extent to which I was doing this cheerleading, hurrah, good job, well done type of thing. and so by receiving that feedback, it created an opportunity where I became more aware and cognizant of it, and then gave me the platform to utilize what I had learned in my trainings of how to make a stronger, more. Am I consistent affirmation, really being

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Billie Jo Smith: specific, really focusing on the individual strengths and not so much my thoughts or judgments on the things that they had done.

Paul Warren: You know, I. When Amy asked this question, two very specific things, like, shot into my head.

Amy Shanahan: Your eyes lit up.

Paul Warren: Yes. And again, you probably can't hear that over the radio, but I'm glad that Amy pointed that out, because thing one is, and it's a phrase that I find very resonant for myself, that a great musician knows when not to play their instrument and

what that feedback meant to me. Washington Paul. Sometimes it's more effective if you say nothing. And. And I think I, given I'm trained as a social worker, I think I felt a certain pressure that I was supposed to say something. And there are moments, and, I love these moments when they happen in an MI conversation, when really all that's required is my attention. I don't need to verbalize anything. So that's some very specific feedback that I got. That was very helpful. And then the second thing is, and this is probably going to be no surprise to either of you or anybody listening to this, I can at times be overly verbose, and I have received feedback that I've really tried to take to heart, that I can make shorter summaries, my reflections can be shorter and they can be more articulate that way and less. They can take up less space and invite more from the other person.

Amy Shanahan: I love that thing one and thing two is the next. It's going to be doctor seuss.

Billie Jo Smith: Absolutely. I was going to say, I think we left the land of Oz and headed in some other direction.

Paul Warren: Oh, the places you'll go. Maybe that's the next podcast.

Amy Shanahan: Love it. Love it. That's my favorite book.

Paul Warren: That's a great book.

Amy Shanahan: I love those examples. They're actually hearing your examples helps me to check myself because I'm definitely over verbose for sure. I get feedback a lot that I add too much, but I really appreciate you offering the specific examples.

Billie Jo Smith: Well, again, I think it speaks to the benefits of not only being the coached, but also coaching, because we can learn to, from what we're hearing from other people, from the feedback, from their feedback on, their tape session or interaction, and then we can think about those things within ourselves. So as you're talking Amy, or you were talking Paul, I thought, yeah, think about how often you're speaking or when it's best to not say anything at all. And so even in those moments, as a coach, we can still get benefit and help to enhance our own use of motivational interviewing.

Paul Warren: Yeah, yeah, agreed. absolutely.

Amy Shanahan: So, you know, we started together, we're wrapping up our 12th episode together, which is really cool. So twelve years ago, is that right, Billie Joe? My fish keeps getting bigger, but I think twelve is about accurate.

Billie Jo Smith: Amy, for the first time ever, twelve is exactly correct.

Amy Shanahan: So twelve years ago, we locked arms together, and on our 12th episode, we're locking arms to have this conversation.

Paul and Amy discuss ways listeners can start practicing motivational interviewing

I so appreciate the history and being on this path with you both for all these years. I'm curious, what next steps would you give for listeners around how they might start their journey in practicing? And I, and one thing I'm really sensitive about is people who may

not have exposure to maybe someone who's really proficient in MI maybe they just have a colleague or two that they went to a training with. But what are some thoughts that you have for listeners about how they can overcome some of their, maybe barriers to committing to or considering coaching? It's always their choice, right.

Paul Warren: I mean, one that I can throw out that pops into my head. And I'm so glad you asked this question, Amy, is we've spent a lot of time talking about sort of one on one coaching.

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Paul Warren: M and I want to underline that one of the things that I have found really beneficial and how our relationship actually started, I guess, twelve years ago, was that we were in a group together and we were in a group of peers. We had a learning community that was working together. So, sometimes a way into individual coaching can be working with a learning community that you, you know, and, and that is with colleagues that, you know, maybe are at the same level that you are. And that's great. And simply having a conversation, exploring either a recording or a transcript together, or talking about the different components of motivational interviewing together keeps the conversation and keeps the reflection on the practice alive. And that can be sometimes a, ah, really supportive way to move into potentially engaging a one on one coach.

Billie Jo Smith: Yeah. And Paul, I think you bring up a good point that it doesn't necessarily have to be something very structured, formal and set up so you could find a colleague or a person that you know that has a similar interest in learning more or exploring more about motivational interviewing and being able to tap into each other's

desire to grow can be a really nice way to start a learning community of your own. and I think there's such a vast amount of individuals that I probably didn't even know existed that share that same passion for motivational interviewing outside of our own world. And so trying to find an opportunity to connect with folks that maybe you don't sit next to at the office and say, hey, would you be interested in working together or starting a group of individuals that just want to practice together? and that can create an environment where coaching and growth can happen.

Amy Shanahan: So you both covered the kind of the group processing and going back to the individual aspects of it. I was thinking about ways that, I took leaps and reaching out and emailing people that maybe I admired or witnessed or observed and asked them for some feedback or ask them for some resources, perhaps as part of my coaching. So it's not always a long term relationship at times. So I would say that I have a pocket full of coaches. so the other thing is, CASAT, the folks that are putting on this podcast offers some follow up coaching sessions to trainees. So there's opportunities there where you can take the risk and reach out and get some coaching that way. And like you both said, just really observing and asking for some feedback from some colleagues as well.

Paul says offering motivational interviewing training can be a great coaching opportunity

Paul Warren: You know, I thought of one other way, too, and I've had this experience, and I know that both of you also train motivational interviewing in addition to doing coaching. And I have to say, as a trainer of m MI somebody who has the opportunity to engage in learning community conversations about motivational interviewing with folks

that are in, you know, that know a lot about motivational interviewing, don't know a whole lot about motivational interviewing. I have found that offering the training has also been a wonderful kind of coaching opportunity for me because it exposes me to different perspectives or ways of thinking about motivational interviewing. So I'm helping people to understand MI m, but I'm also simultaneously learning from them and being coached in that dialogue.

Amy Shanahan: Sure.

Billie Jo Smith: Yeah. And Paul, I also think that another way that folks could, create their own coaching would be to talk with folks that are doing trainings. Right. I was fortunate in that when I walked into my position, it was very obvious that there was also a group of people that wanted to learn more and were passionate about MI m. And so I easily stepped into that. But as Amy had mentioned, like in the question, not everybody has that vast network. and so for folks who maybe can't identify or haven't identified somebody in their vicinity that would be interested, being able to approach a, trainer that is doing motivational

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Billie Jo Smith: interviewing, to say, like, hey, you know, I really liked what we talked about today. I would like more. Do you have any suggestions? Because I think that the community of individuals that I've been fortunate enough to encounter, not just in my own practice and learning communities, but within mint, you can, as Amy mentioned, email a person that wrote an article that really resonated with you, and that individual seems helpful in connecting. And so for a person straight out of the gate to be able to walk up to a trainer and say, like, hey, how can I do more of this? Could be helpful.

Paul Warren: You know, I think had it not been for our collaboration, I don't know if I would have ever felt comfortable emailing Steven Rolnick and saying, hey, would you be willing to talk with a couple of us and let us ask you some questions? I mean, Stephen Rolnick, one of the co creators of motivational interviewing, and again, astoundingly, he was so generous and so open, and I entertained our questions. And, you know, because I'm part of a community, I felt like, you know, we're all on the same page here. It's, it's perfectly okay to ask for help in regard to this.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah, those are great points. The community is so giving and the important thing is, I would assume I don't want to speak for the whole community of MI practitioners, really, know that our own practice is important. So when we teach, we learn. When we coach, we learn. So it's really helpful when people reach out. I feel honored when people reach out and ask for feedback or just a question and, or for coaching.

Amy Shanahan: Because I know that I'm going to benefit from that opportunity as well.

Paul Warren: So here we are. It seems that we're at the conclusion, at least, of this conversation.

Paul Warren: And I'm wondering, I feel that it's so fitting that Billie Jo is here, and certainly it makes me also think of the other folks that were with us at that, that beginning place. And I'm wondering what your thoughts are, what sort of final reflections you might have about our conversation or about coaching.

Billie Jo Smith: I think one thing that stands out to me is both sides of the coin. Right. As a coach, to continue to be aware and mindful of how much, benefits my own MI skill

and practice and how valuable that relationship can be. And then from the individual being coached side of it, to, to have an understanding of my level of anxiety that based on this conversation we had today is not, it's not just me. I'm not the only one with the imposter syndrome. and how to be. How to utilize that in a way to continue to grow my skills. Right. To be open to feedback, to be excited about feedback, because it will help me grow. and to not. Yeah. But the strengths as well, that there are strengths there and to embrace all of it in one big package and really get the total, the total benefits of the coaching experience.

Amy Shanahan: I feel like saying ditto was, well said.

Paul Warren: Go ahead and say it.

Amy Shanahan: Ditto, ditto, ditto. I think the thing that was standing out to me was to be mindful of complacency. that sometimes I can feel like get into my comfortable shoes and not reach out for it. And before we started recording, Billie Jo welcomed me back into a practice group, ah, that I used to be a part of. And I was a little nervous going back in after being out. So not getting too complacent because that inner critic kind of can grow, with gaps of time, in between coaching sessions. So really, not being too hard on ourselves as well, and not getting stuck in my comfortable shoes.

Paul Warren: Yeah. I think the thing that I'm mindful of. And again, especially because I have this privilege to talk with the both of you, is that am I. Is not something you do alone. It's something that. It's a conversation with somebody else. And my growth, letting,

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Paul Warren: go of some of my anxiety and my growth with MI has really come out of talking with people that I can trust and that I feel I can be vulnerable with. and it's a very unique experience because I think it is easy to get isolated and to feel like you're alone in this. And MI really invites the opportunity for the coach. For the coach to. To be in a conversation with somebody and to be part of something that's bigger than just me. So I really am, so thankful to have had the opportunity to talk with both of you about this and feel really, free and not, self critical participating in this conversation.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah, I feel privileged as well and so happy to be back, back together with you.

Billie Jo Smith: And thank you both for allowing me to be a part of this conversation. Today, again, continues to ignite my own flame for motivational interviewing and to continue to grow and practice as a practitioner and coach. So thank you both.

Amy Shanahan: Thanks, Billie Jo for being our guest.

Paul Warren: Yes, thank you.

Billie Jo Smith: Thanks for listening to episode twelve of Lions and Tigers and Bears. Am I be on the lookout for more episodes soon. CASAT Podcast Network this podcast has been brought to you by the CASAT Podcast Network, located within the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies at the University of Nevada, Reno. For more podcasts, information and resources, visit casat.org

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