



Using Motivational Interviewing with Children & Adolescents

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TCC, NOW and NOW Youth Clinics

Learning Objectives

- 1) Identify three special considerations for using MI among youngsters
- 2) Describe three MI techniques for rolling with resistance
- 3) Describe three MI techniques for evoking change talk

I will ask at the end: If you had to identify one MI technique from today to experiment with in the next week, what would it be?

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

A method of talking
with people
about change.

Target Behavior:

The change the client is facing

The change the client wants OR needs



Ambivalence = Pulled in Two Directions

Our *blueprint* is to move toward health and growth

Resistance/Sustain

Helps manage stress

Physically addicted

All friends smoke

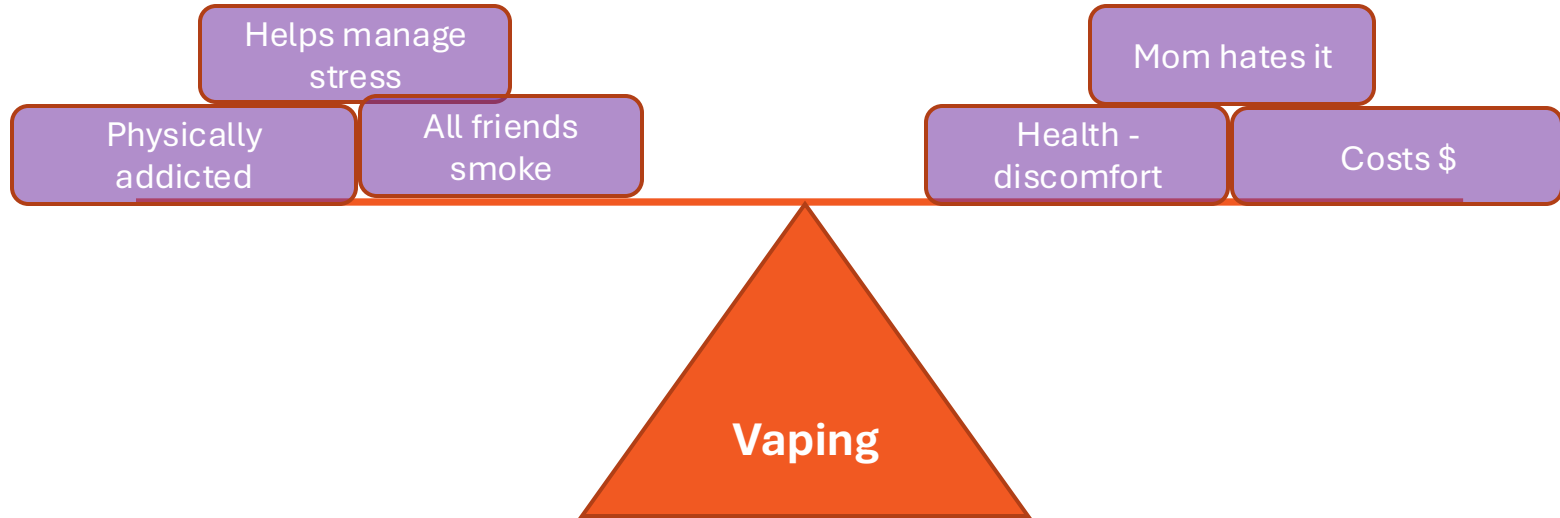
Change

Mom hates it

Health - discomfort

Costs \$

Vaping



What happens when you talk to an ambivalent person?



You hear both sides

This is just how my life is.
I shouldn't have to.
I don't deserve better.
I don't have a choice.
I'm scared to try.
It's not worth the effort.
It's not my fault.
It's not that serious.

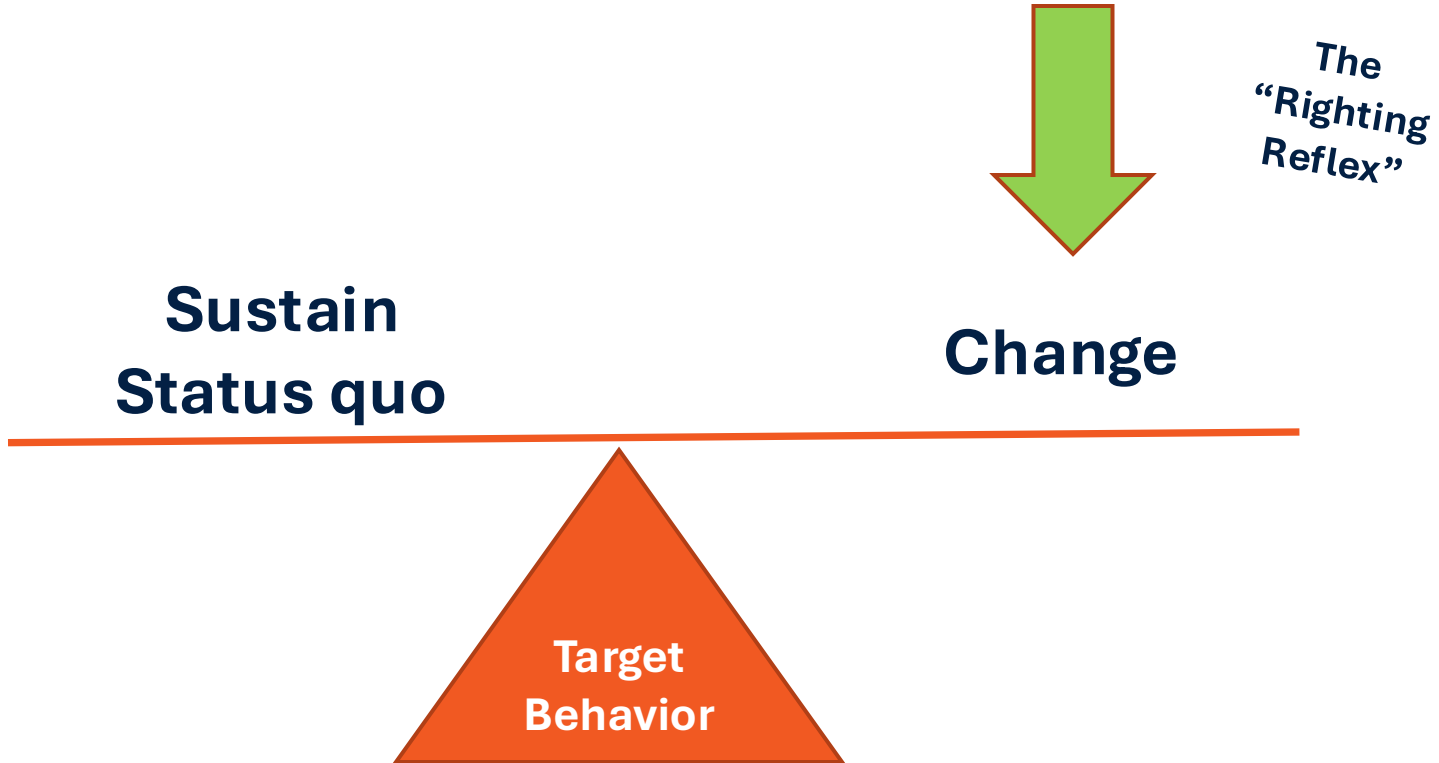
Sustain Talk=
Pt talk about factors
that pull away from
change

I know it's worth the effort.
I care about my health.
I'm looking forward to getting back on track.
It's mostly for my son.
I know what I have to do.
I was doing better for a while.

Change Talk =
Pt talk about factors
that pull toward
change

**Target
Behavior**

Your Goal: Tilt the scale toward change



Opposite Day

If you try to push down on the Change side of the scale by convincing the person to change, this may CREATE resistance.



“Don’t push me.”
“Don’t judge me.”
“You don’t understand.”
“You don’t really care.”

MI works in two ways

STEP 1

Neutralize **resistance** to

- Working with you
- Talking about change

STEP 2

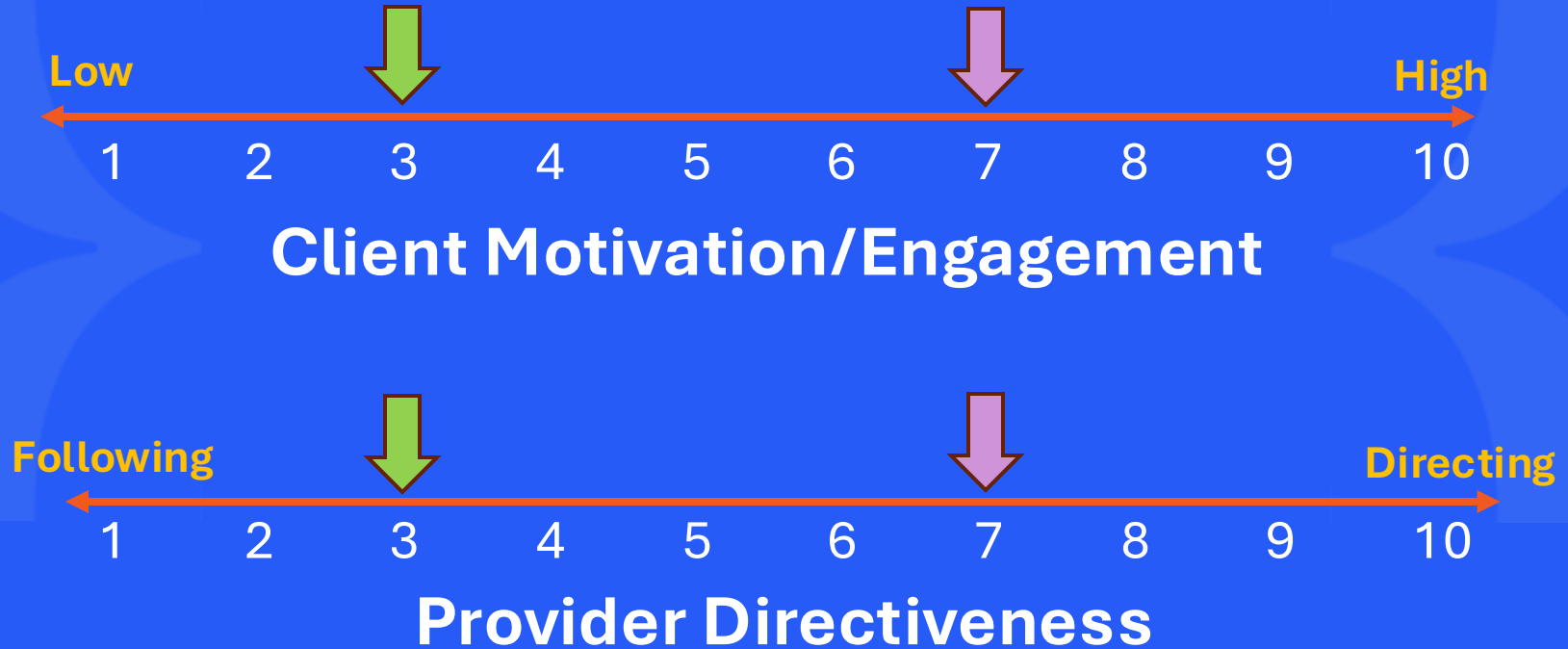
Foster **motivation** for change

Resistance =

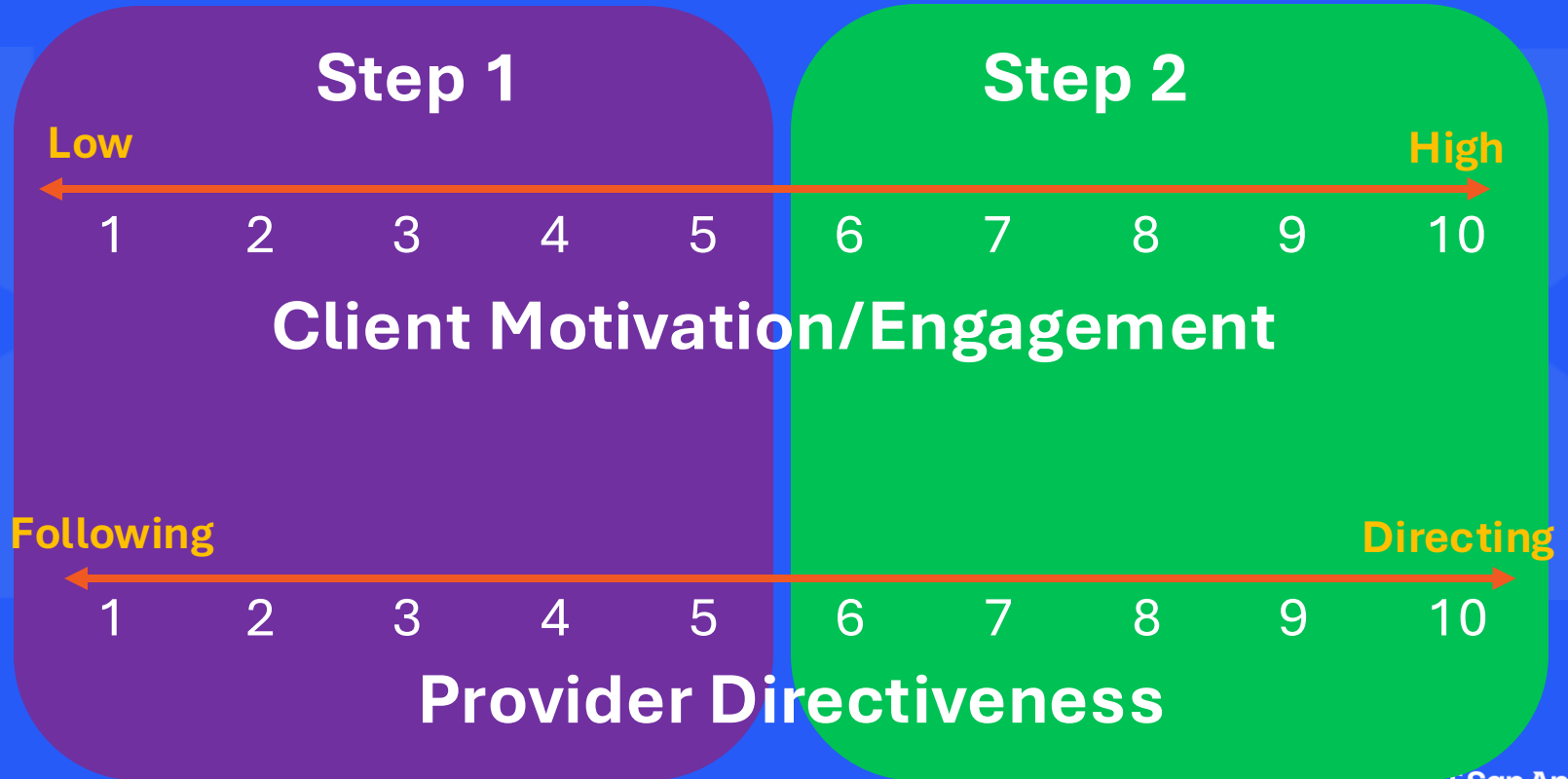
Any factor within the client that slows change

Fears
Lack of knowledge
Negative expectations
Status quo feels good

Match your directiveness to your client's motivation



Match your directiveness to your client's motivation



Rolling with Resistance

Step 1

The Magic Maneuver:
Join in resistance and
orient to change in one
fell swoop

Key Techniques – Step 1

MI Spirit

- **Collaboration** between the practitioner and the client
- **Evoking** or drawing out the client's ideas about change
 - EVOKING vs TELLING
- Emphasizing the **autonomy** of the client
- Practicing **compassion** and **acceptance** in the process



MI Spirit

Is more a way of being than a technique.

Key Techniques – Step 1

OARS



O

Open-ended
questions

1/3rd

A

Affirmations

Some

R

Reflections

>50%

S

Summaries

Long
reflections

OARS is more about **technique** than “way of being.”

Key Techniques – Step 1

Resist making
suggestions

More reflections
than questions

Rolling with Resistance

1. Validation
2. Double-sided reflection
3. Amplified reflection
4. Focus on change
5. Emphasize autonomy
6. Come alongside



Validation



Validate Stuckness

Validate = Normalize not changing

"From my heart to yours..."

"That must be really scary to feel like people are spying on you."

"I can see why you felt you had to cover your windows."

"I would feel that way too."

"It makes sense that you're stuck."

Affirm Change

Affirm change= **"From my heart to yours..."**

"I'm impressed by your effort."

"I'm impressed that you come talk to me even though it feels scary."

"I can tell that this is very important to you and that is pushing you forward."

Double-Sided Reflection

List factors pulling toward **no change**;
and then list factors pulling toward
change.

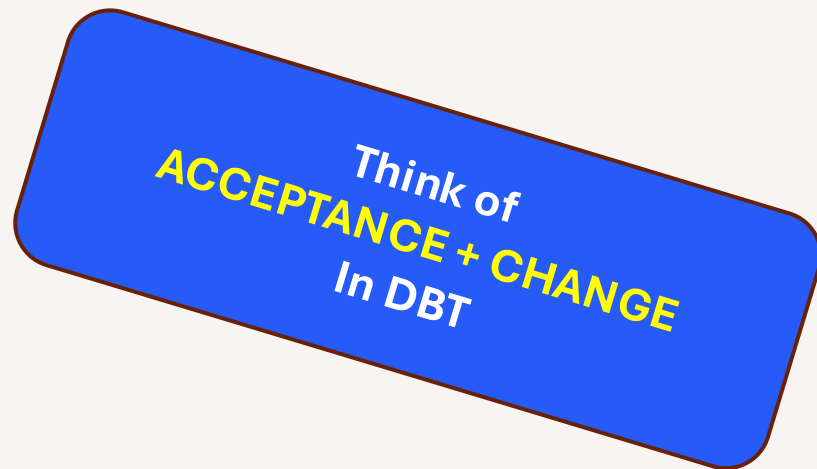
*“**On the one hand**, vaping helps you manage your stress, and most of your friends vape. **On the other hand**, you’re excited about quitting and it’s important to you to quit for your girlfriend.”*



Double-Sided Reflection

Part of you wants to be free, but you know you need your parents still.

More core ambivalences in teens?



Double-sided Reflection

Let's Try!

Listen to Dave's situation with his breakfast tacos and then type a double-sided reflection in the chat box.

List factors pulling toward **no change**; and then list factors pulling toward **change**.

Amplified Reflection

Exaggerates a resistant statement so that the client will disagree.

Teen: I'm sick of going to the doctor all the time. It's a hassle and it gets in the way of the online gaming that I like to do.

You: Gaming is very important to you, more important than your health.

Teen: No, I know my health is important. I just don't like going.

You: Your health is important to you. Tell me about that.

TIP

**Best for LOW
motivation
(1 to 3)**

TIP

**Read the room
and try either:**

- 1) Irreverence**
- 2) Authenticity**

Amplified Reflection

Let's Try!

Client says, “Everybody’s always looking at me, but if my parents would just get off my back, things wouldn’t be so bad.”

**Type an amplified reflection
in the chat OR say one out
loud.**

TIP

The **test** of a good amplified reflection is that you exaggerate enough so the client says “No, I am not **THAT** resistant.”

Focus on Change

Stay on the topic while remaining neutral regarding action

So, stepping back, how does this relate to the question of change?

Where does this leave you in terms of the choice you're thinking about?

How does this link to that question of change?

What does that tell us about the decision you're facing?

You: Can we talk about what happened at school?

Client: Oh great, what do you want to lecture me about now?

You: I just want to hear your thoughts.

TIP

Best when motivation
is above 3/10

TIP

DIRECT conversation
to the topic, then
hand over the mic.

Come Alongside

In response to sustained resistance, join the client in no-change and lean into “creative hopelessness”

You: We’ve been talking for a few weeks, and you’ve been pretty clear that change is not something you are trying for right now. I can respect that. I also know that you are planning to keep coming to our meetings. How could we spend our time that would feel worthwhile for you?

Client: It’s not that I don’t want to change. I just don’t think I can...

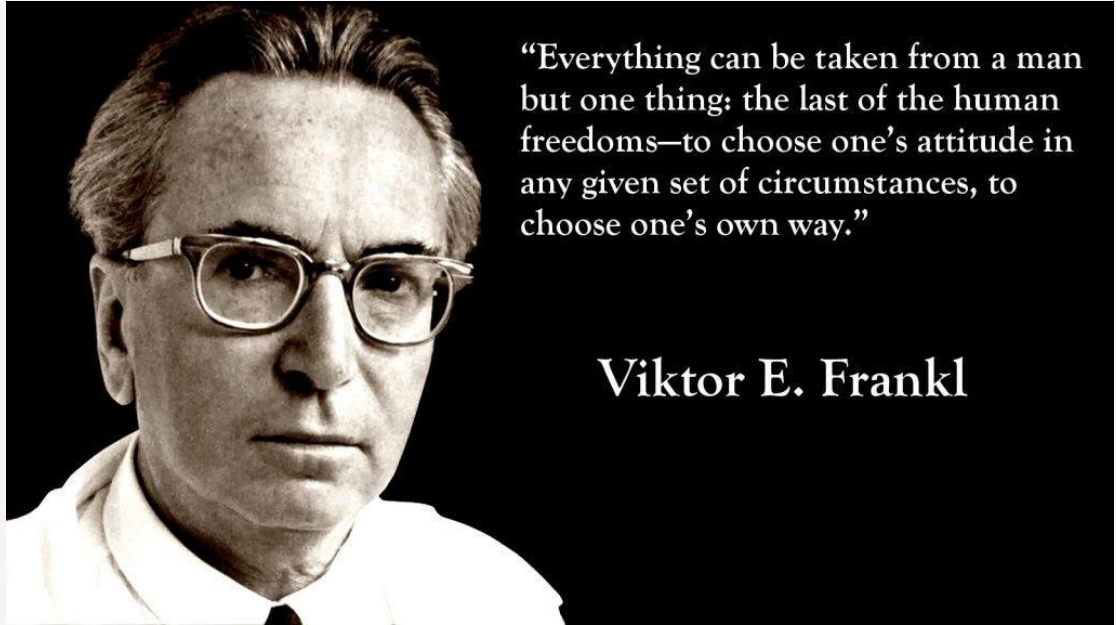


I have no control in my life

Constrained Autonomy and Choice

Validation

I can see why your
hands feel tied,
how it almost
feels like you don't
have any choices
at all.



“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

Viktor E. Frankl

Blended Techniques

Coming Alongside, Emphasize Autonomy, Amplified Reflection

Teen: Nothing works. Talking isn't going to help. It's my dad that's the problem anyway.

You: "I can understand why you are choosing not to change. And even though therapy is about making changes, I hope you will choose to keep meeting with me to see if I can be helpful."

“I have no control in my life” – A Step-1 exercise

What techniques do we see here?

Teen: I have no say in my own life. It sucks.

You: I can see how it almost feels like you have no choices.

Teen: No, I really don't. I don't get to do anything I want.

You: You don't even have control of your own arms.

Teen: Haha. You know what mean.

You: I'm not sure I do...

Teen: I mean about the choices that really matter.

You: Yes, let's talk about those choices that really matter.

DARN
foreshadowing...



Evoking Change Talk

Step 2

Key Techniques – Step 2

Evoking Change Talk

1. DARN Questions
2. Seek elaboration of change theme
3. Look forward/back & Query extremes
4. Scaling
5. Explore goals and values



DARN – Step 2

Use DARN to conceptualize your client's motivation

Desire = All feelings related to change or no change

Ability = Client's confidence in their ability to change

Reasons = The concrete pro's and con's of change

Need = The importance of change to the client

“On the one hand, change **feels** scary and you're not very **confident**, but on the other hand, one **reason** to change is that it is **important** to you to graduate.”

DARN = *The 4 natural categories of intrinsic motivation*

Key Techniques – Step 2

Use DARN Questions to Evoke Change Talk

Desire

What would it feel like if you tried to change and succeeded?

Ability

How confident are you that you could do it if you decided, from 1 to 10? / Why not a **lower** number?

Reasons

What are the three best reasons you see to make this change?

Need

How important is it to you to address this, from 1 to 10? / What could happen that would make that number go up?

DARN = *The 4 natural categories of intrinsic motivation*

Key Techniques – Step 2

Looking Forward

In what ways can your choices now influence your future? (blended with **Emphasize Autonomy**)

DARN = *The 4 natural categories of intrinsic motivation*

Considerations for using MI with Children & Adolescents

Evidence for MI in Youth

Evidence in adolescence for

- Reducing substance use (meta-analysis of 21 studies)
- Engaging in services
- Sexual risk behaviors
- Reduce BMI, cholesterol, blood pressure

Considerations for using MI in Youth

- **Young Children (< 10)**
 - **Unable to juxtapose hypotheticals, which is key to exploring ambivalence**
 - **Use simple & complex reflections to help organize narratives and scaffold self-understanding**
- **Teens**
 - **Ambivalence between emerging independence and ongoing need for support**
 - **Risky and unhealthy behaviors associated with identity exploration**

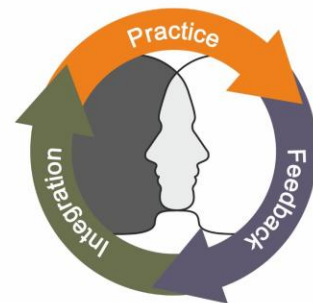
Ambivalence

Fighting for Autonomy while Needing Support



Ready to build skill?

- Practice on your peers instead of your patients.
- Significant, measurable improvement in your MI skills
- Flexibly scheduled online group sessions
- Semi-structured
 - 1/3rd practice
 - 1/3rd video modeling
 - 1/3rd discussion



reflectivetraining.org

Thank you for your attention and participation!



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The University of Texas at San Antonio

**If you had to identify one ML technique
from today to experiment with in the next
week, what would it be?**

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