Integrating Motivational Interviewing within Employment Services for Income Assistance Recipients

Partners in Innovation:
Putting Innovation into Action
Vancouver, BC – May 30, 2017
Personal services and supports include things like:

- Group workshops or individual sessions
- Training services
- Customized job placement and work experience placement services for clients with significant barriers to employment
- Self-employment assessment services
- Financial supports are available for eligible clients.

But many employment-obligated clients do not take advantage, or do not follow through on employment plans or persist with their services and supports.
Income Assistance caseloads are increasing: clients are finding it harder to leave benefit
Services are often designed with the assumption that clients are in a position to engage actively in changing their lives. But IA clients may not be ready to change.

Many IA clients have lost confidence in their ability to secure employment:
- The recipient may have lost their motivation;
- Low self-confidence and self-esteem may challenge clients in making transitions, leading to failure in and dropping out of programs offering services and support.

An important step can be missed in employment development work. Job seekers will be at different stages of readiness, and thus need different forms of support.
Motivational Interviewing is a communication method intended to move a person toward change, focusing on exploring and resolving ambivalence as a key to eliciting that change.

- Intended to facilitate and engage intrinsic motivation within the client in order to change behaviour.
- The interviewer seeks to elicit “change talk” (participant initiating discussion about the idea of changing).
- A client’s readiness for change may be assessed over time to determine whether & when MI is appropriate.
A subtle but critical change in practice

“Goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person’s own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion”

~ Miller & Rollnick, 2011
How does MI work?

• A way of structuring conversations so that
  • Clients will be more likely to initiate talk about their desire and need for making important changes.
  • Clients are guided to speak more often about the advantages of change than about the advantages of not changing.
  • Clients hear themselves using this type of language (“change talk”).

• MI helps people to fortify their thinking about needing to make good changes
  • Works by helping a client think about and build her own argument for why she ought to pursue certain changes, through four processes:

  Engage (e.g. “Shall we walk together?”)
  Focus (e.g. “Where?”)
  Evoke (e.g. “Why?” → MI)
  Planning (e.g. “How?”)
Principles of MI

• *Express empathy* – applying counseling skills: Open-ended questions; Affirmations; Reflective listening; Summary Statements

• *Develop discrepancy* – helps the client see the discrepancy between present and desired behaviour, goals, and values: motivating behaviour change → *Amplifies ambivalence*

• *Roll with resistance* – reframing clients’ resistance, in order to create the conditions for the client to argue for change

• *Support self-efficacy* – respecting clients ability to make their own decisions
Several teams have designed trials to test MI in employment and training, in order to measure its impact or promote the implementation of promising programs and practices.

- **Stages of Change:** In 2007-10, Opportunities for Employment explored the impact across all its clients of training case managers in MI.
  - In a randomly assigned phase 1, 63 per cent of the program group moved to employment compared to 47 per cent of controls.
  - In phase 2, first-time employment and sustainable employment improved.

- **MIPP:** SRDC piloted MI in Fraser Valley E&IA offices and WorkBC Centres in 2012-14 among *long-term* E&IA clients.
Tests of MI in employment services (2)

- **MIEP:** In 2013-16, SRDC tested MI in Winnipeg, training EIA case coordinators to use MI:
  - Randomly assigned offices delivered one of two different interventions – Motivational Interviewing (MI) or Intentional Practice (IP)
  - IP encourages caseworkers to have more conversations with clients to help them reach goals, but it does not specify how they should happen.
- **MIESP:** From 2014-16 the BC CfEE piloted MI training case managers to use MI in BC’s lower mainland WorkBC Centres in 2012-13 among E&IA clients.
MIESP worked with 7 Work BC Centres

• BC CfEE worked with Back in Motion (Avia Employment Services), Empowering Change (MI Trainers) and MSDSI to:
  • assess the impact of integrating MI into employment services for different groups of E&IA clients
  • explore integrating MI into case managers’ practice with E&IA clients
Example project plan: MIESP

- **May 2015**
  - Case managers sign up to join project

- **July-August 2015**
  - 15 case managers begin MI training
  - SRDC interviews MI-trained case managers during project

- **Oct 2015 to Oct 2016**
  - Other case managers continue business as usual
  - IA clients sign up to join project
  - Case managers use MI with E&IA clients
  - Client outcomes in surveys and administrative data

- **Early 2017**
  - Allocated proportionate share of new E&IA clients
  - Analysis for final report
  - Client outcomes in surveys and administrative data

- **Random Assignment**
### The evidence on MI’s impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Who was trained to use MI?</th>
<th>E&amp;IA/EIA participants</th>
<th>↑ employment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Stages of Change** (Opportunities for Employment, 2010) | Opportunities for Employment counsellors               | 65                     | MI stream: 27%  
Non-MI: 17%  
EIA clients employed 6 months after enrolment |
| **Motivational Interviewing Pilot Project** (SRDC, 2014) | E&IA EP workers and WorkBC case managers               | 154                    | MI stream: 9%  
Non-MI: 2%  
Long-term E&IA employed 3 months after enrolment |
| **Motivational Interviewing Evaluation Project** (SRDC, 2016) | Case coordinators/counsellors                           | 1,114                  | MI stream: 28%  
Non-MI: 21%  
Exiting the EIA caseload 9 to 12 months after enrolment |
| Integrating Motivational Interviewing (BC CfEE, 2017) | WorkBC case managers                                    | 154                    | MI stream: 9%  
Non-MI: 5%  
E&IA clients employed full-time 3 months after enrolment |
Qualitative data from the project’s implementation research suggested that
• case managers valued the MI training greatly
  • I thought it was amazing. I feel like the new role of the case manager lacked that interpersonal element – and this [MI] brought it back to a more holistic way of dealing with clients. I was terribly excited – I felt euphoric after the first day.
MIESP case manager reflections

- MI is a potentially useful tool for employment counselling for clients who are
  - ambivalent with respect to making a change in their lives
  - ambivalent yet already motivated to make a change
    - ...empowering the client...
    - ...stoking the fire...
    - ...conversation on change and focusing on moving forward ...
MI helped clients

- to move toward greater clarity with respect to decision-making
- to achieve intermediate goals which could help with their eventual transition to the labour market
Incongruity between the WorkBC model of priorities/sequencing of activities in case management and integration of the MI approach:

- wanted to apply the full set of MI principles when seeing E&IA clients
- imbalance in power between themselves and E&IA clients
- difficult to fully implement when there are large caseloads
It’s so frustrating because I used it with this one client and she opened up and was crying. I did not know she was battling all that stuff – and then I didn’t see her for 3-4 weeks and we started back from scratch.

You have to focus on barriers with the client at intake and MI says you do not focus on barriers. But we have to ask certain questions that puts light on the barriers.

In general, it [MI] has become a part of my life.
What have we learned?
Even within the existing process, MI has been found a useful tool for engaging clients. Yet results fall short of expectations.

**Recommendations**

- Change the sequence or funding structure for case management activities to include MI
- MI practice needs to adapt if it is to work in all employment centre settings
Questions
Thank you!