



# Motivational Interviewing for School Coaches

Funded by: Institute for Education Sciences  
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MODULE A:  
An Introduction to  
Motivational Interviewing



# Module A: Topics Covered

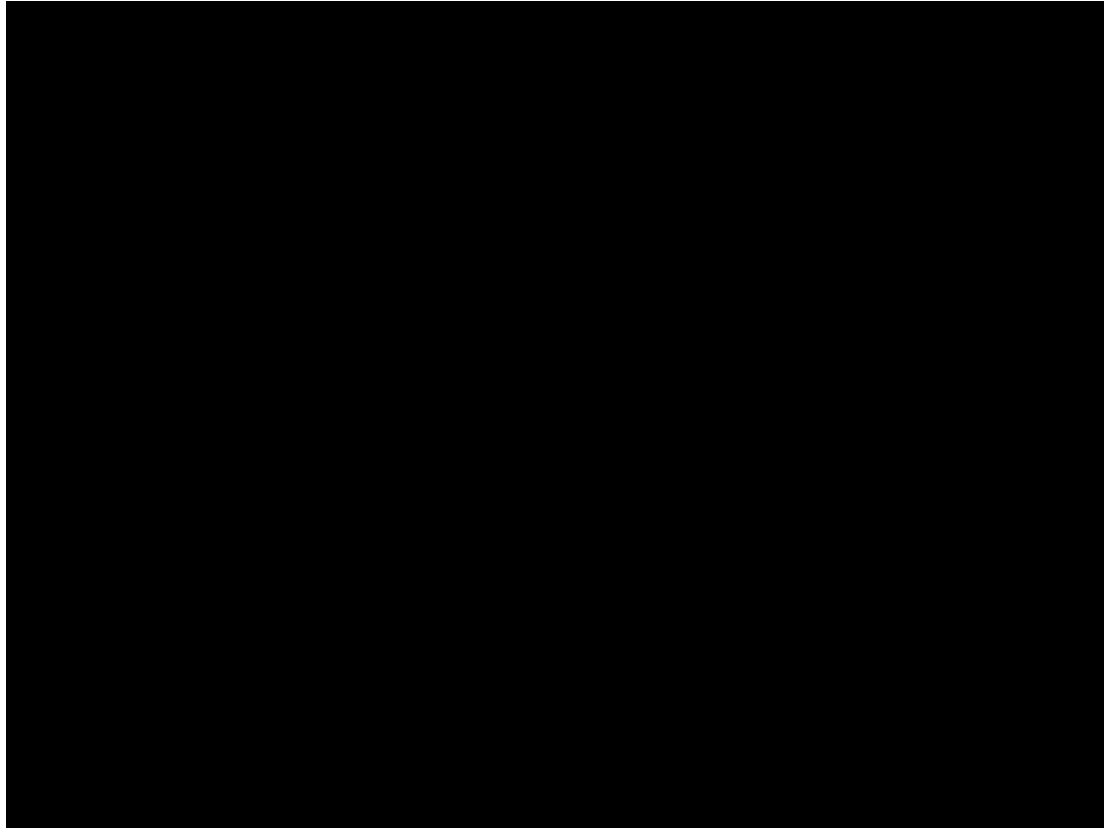
- The History of MI
- The Theory of MI
- Key concepts of MI: Ambivalence, Change Talk, Sustain Talk, and the Righting-Reflex
- The MI Spirit: finding the right mindset and “posture”
- The Technical Skills of MI: OARS
- The MI Processes: the road map of MI



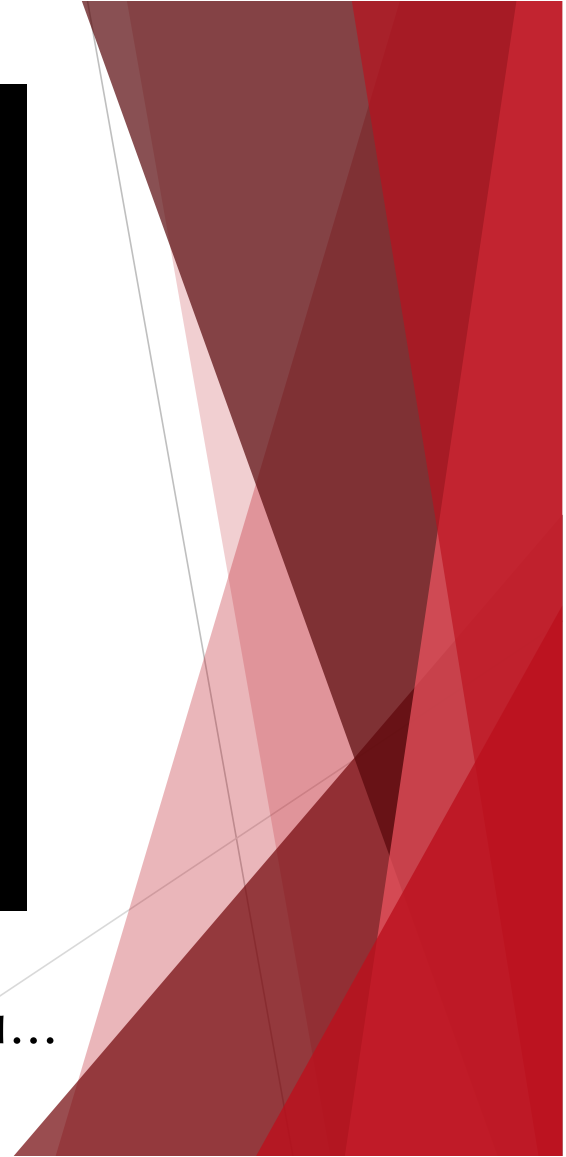
## Module A, Learning Objectives:

At the end of this module, participants will be able to...

1. Define MI and describe its key concepts
2. Explain and describe the MI Spirit and OARS
3. Recognize how the MI processes and skills complement and support the CBP procedures.



What you're hoping we're about to teach you...



# Brief History of MI

## “Helping People Change”

- Nearly 30 years of empirical research
- Miller & Rollnick
- Substance abuse and healthcare fields
  - Learning from the “Old School”
  - Increases commitment, extends engagement times, and improves outcomes
- Implications for School and Educational Settings



## Defining MI

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, 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. Done within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.



## In other words... “Motivational Conversation”

- MI is a strategic way of having a conversation about change.
- It can occur in any context but must be a collaborative process.
- It is a matter of guiding and listening, not directing and instructing.
- It takes us out of the expert role and meets the other person where they are.

**How we talk about change can influence our behavior!!!**



## Let's get a sense of your work...

- ▶ What areas of focus typically come up in your coaching?
- ▶ How do the individuals you work with typically end up connected with you?
- ▶ Describe what it's like when a teacher is already motivated to work with you.
- ▶ Describe what it's like when they are not motivated to work with you.



# Ambivalence...

I really  
should...

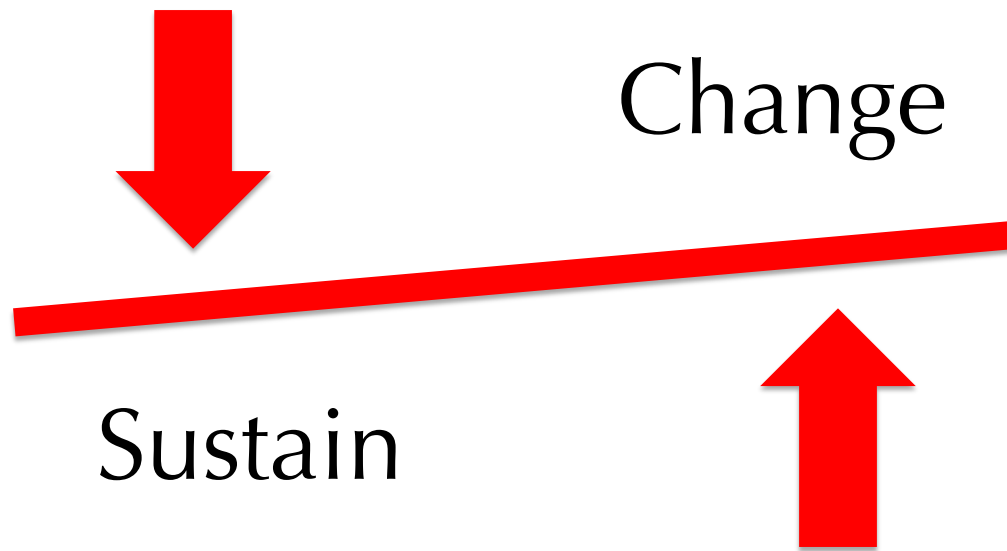
But, I don't  
want to...



## On the one hand... but on the other...

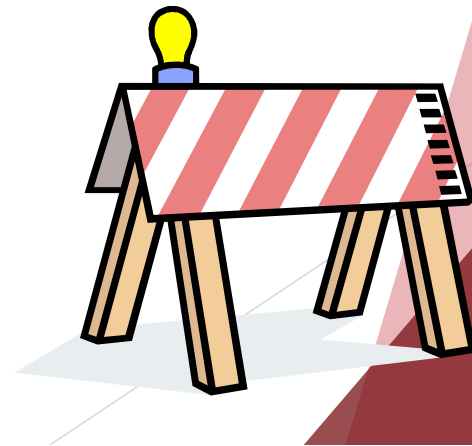
I'm so exhausted from trying to manage my student's behaviors in my classroom. I'd like to try something new, but I'm not sure where to begin. Besides, it's hard for me to do anything new consistently. And these kids don't seem to care what I do, or even care about school for that matter. When I try to be nice, the class gets out of hand, but I know punishing them isn't working. Besides, I want the vibe in my classroom to be better. I think some new strategies could really help, but I am too overwhelmed to put the effort in.

Ambivalence is Natural



# The “Righting Reflex”

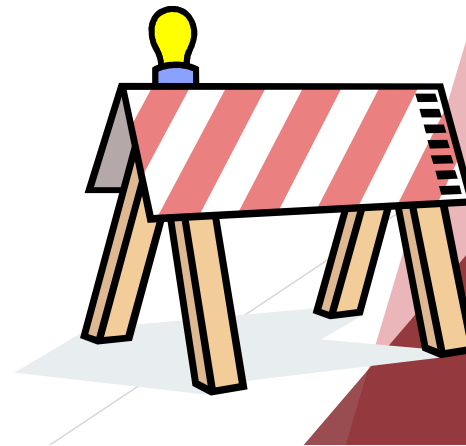
- We have a natural tendency to help
- To ‘right’ what is wrong
- We offer advice, information, and our personal experience



# The “Righting Reflex” – Group Discussion

Can anyone offer any personal examples?

What does it feel like when this is occurring?




It's not about the nail....





Where should we shine a light?

**What do we do instead of “righting” the situation?**





## The value of 'Pros and Cons'

	Status Quo	Change
Advantages	Good things about <i>Status Quo</i> ST	Good things about <i>Change</i> CT
Dis- advantages	Not-so-good things about <i>Status Quo</i> CT	Not-so-good things about <i>Change</i> ST

# Change Talk

Statements that indicate someone is:

- Considering making a change

“I’ve been thinking some of the new strategies you introduced me to.”

- Motivated to make a change

“I’ve really been excited to incorporate more OTRs in me teaching.”

- Committed to making a change

“I am ready to try this, what I’m doing now isn’t working.”



# Sustain Talk

Statements that indicate someone is:

- Considering staying the same

“I don’t think I have the energy right now to try this new approach.”

- Unsure of the unknown

“I’m a little skeptical, I’ve never focused so much on positive feedback.”

- Not sure they can make change.

“I’m not sure this will work; I don’t think I can pull it off.”

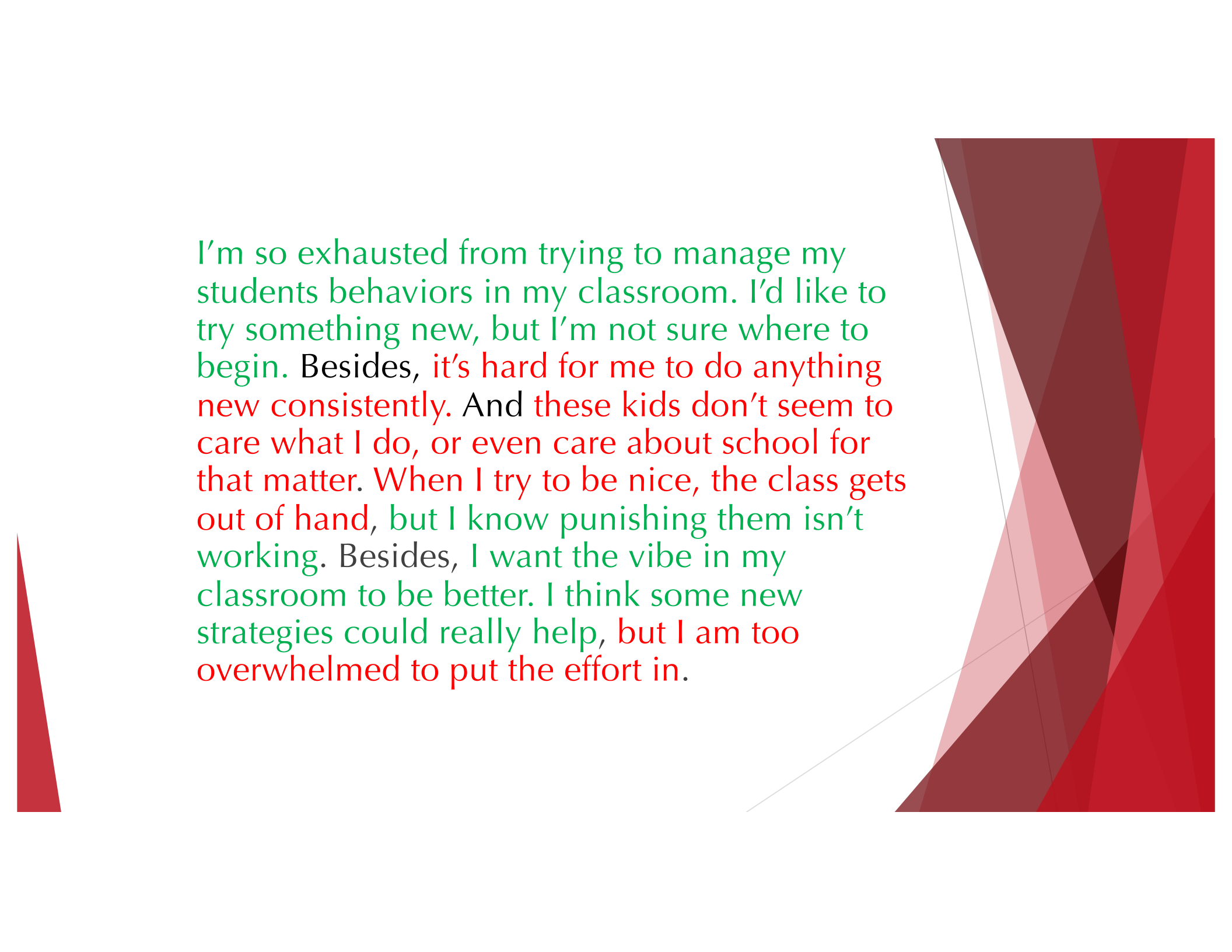


# Change vs. Sustain Talk

1. I do tend to yell a lot and I know it's not working.
2. I think my students are doing just fine without all these activities.
3. I really need to focus on this, to make a difference.
4. I know something has to change. I just don't have time to learn a completely new approach right now. Maybe I could consider what Ms. Jones is doing in her class.
5. I just need to accept this is how I am.
6. We've tried all those approaches before. Nothing works.
7. I'm giving some serious thought to this, and I don't think it's for me.

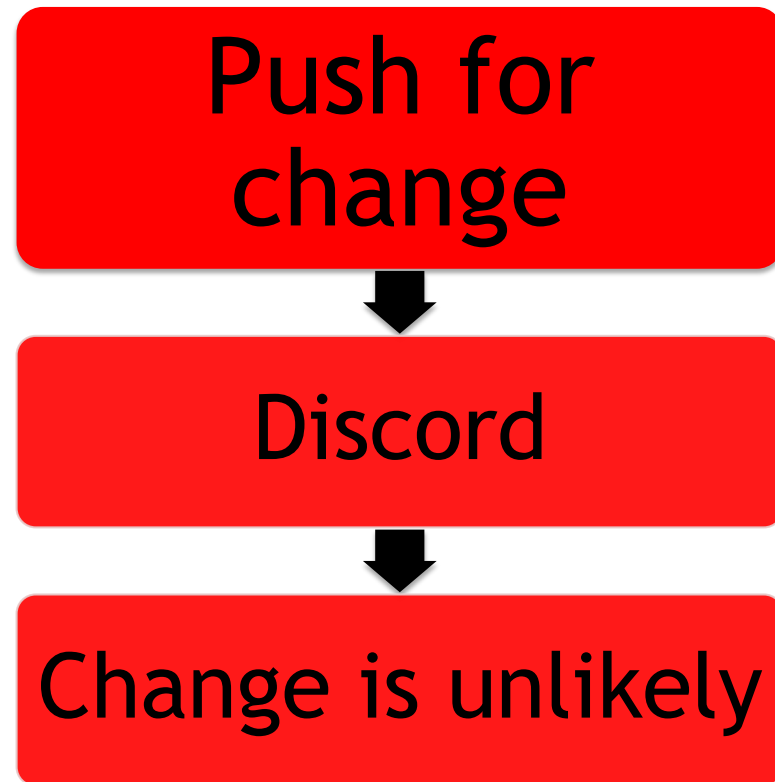
Take out your Ambivalence Exercise.



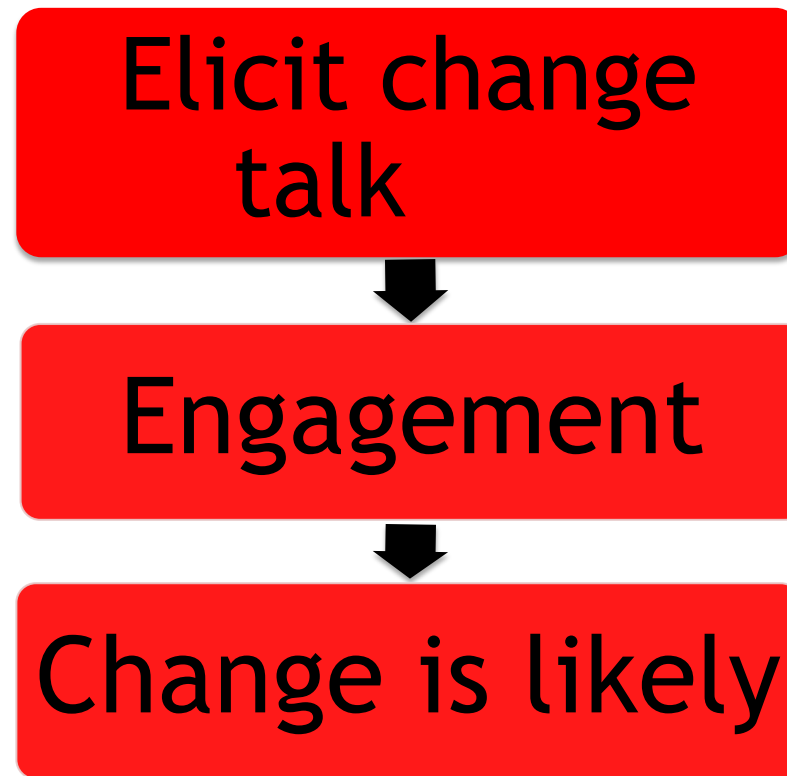


I'm so exhausted from trying to manage my students behaviors in my classroom. I'd like to try something new, but I'm not sure where to begin. Besides, it's hard for me to do anything new consistently. And these kids don't seem to care what I do, or even care about school for that matter. When I try to be nice, the class gets out of hand, but I know punishing them isn't working. Besides, I want the vibe in my classroom to be better. I think some new strategies could really help, but I am too overwhelmed to put the effort in.

## Underlying Theory of MI:



## Underlying Theory of MI (cont.)





# A Taste of Motivational Interviewing.

Find a partner and decide who will coach and who will be coached.

- Pick one thing about they want/need to change in their life (not too personal).
- How they would bring this up with their best friend.
- What (if anything) they have tried already with respect to making this change

Arrange yourselves with the coach facing the screen and the person being coached facing your partner, not the screen.



## Experience #1

If you are the coach, take a couple minutes to listen to their story, then...

1. Give some feedback on the situation they shared.
2. Try to share a personal experience of your own that relates to theirs.
3. Offer them some advice for how to move forward making the change they described.



## Experience #2

If you are the coach, take a couple minutes to listen to their story, then ask them...

1. Why do you want to make this change?
2. What are the 3 best reasons for you to do it?
3. If you decide to make this change, how might you go about doing it?

Lastly, acknowledge that change is difficult, and affirm them for considering this change.

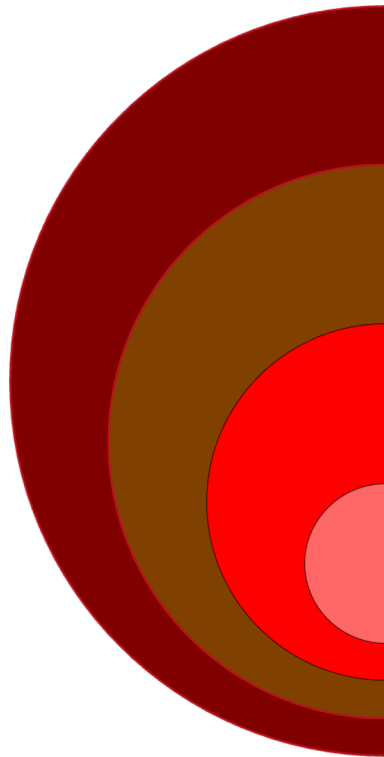


## The Components of MI:

- ▶ The MI Spirit: the posture and attitude we take
- ▶ The OARS: the technical skills we use
- ▶ The MI Processes: the roadmap we follow through the change process



# The MI Spirit

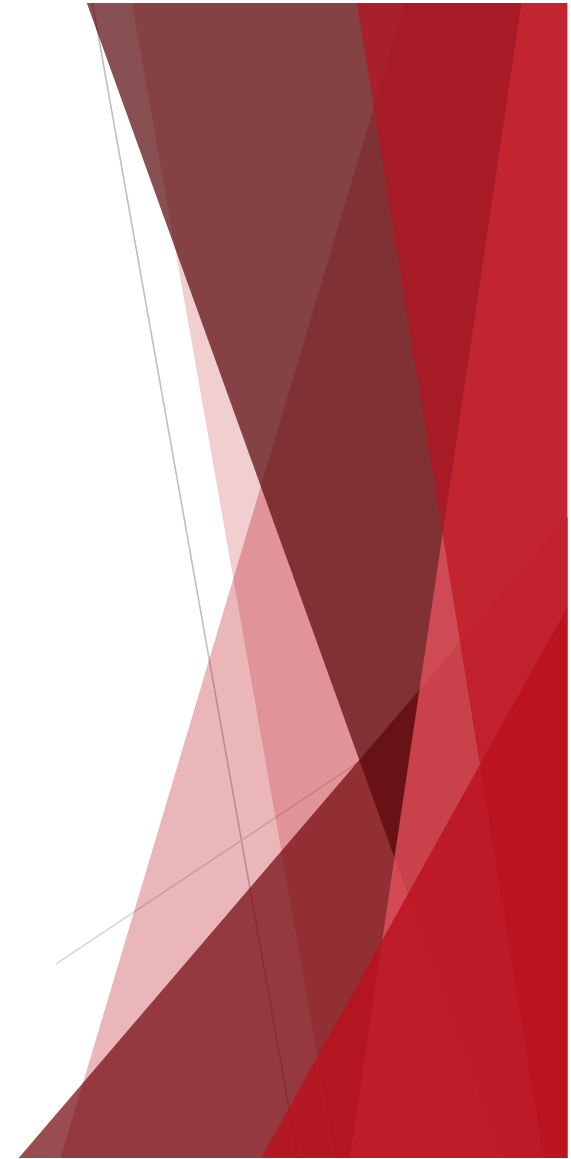


Partnership

Acceptance

Evocation

Compassion



## Partnership.

- MI is not done “to” someone, it’s done “for” and “with” a person.
- Dancing vs. wrestling (moving with rather than against each other)
- Letting go of the assumption that you are the expert, who should have and provide all the right answers!!!



# Acceptance.

Not the same as approval (which is irrelevant here). Rather, it is....

Believing in a person's absolute worth – respecting the other and their right to grow.

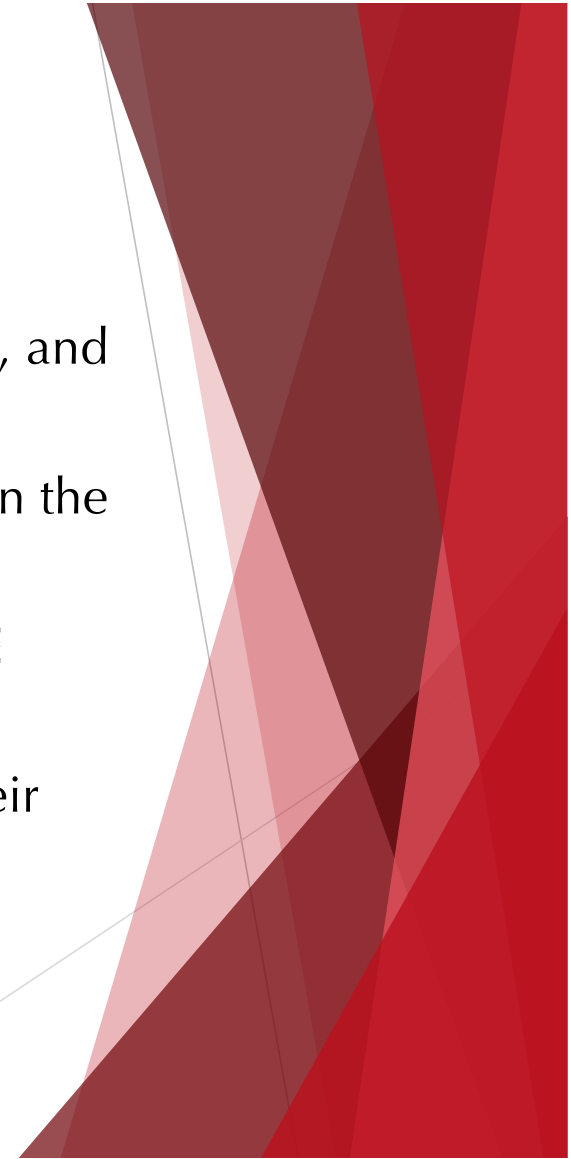
- It's the opposite of judgment
- Autonomy - the choice always remains with the individual.
- Letting go of the idea and burden that you have to make people change.
- Accurate empathy – an effort to understand the other's perspective, to see the world as they see it



## Evocation.

To evoke means to “call forth”, to “stir up”, or to “draw out”.

- This principle communicates that “you have what you need, and together, we will find it.”
- Ambivalence – both sides of the argument are already within the person and need exploring.
- Coach’s job is simply to evoke and strengthen the **CHANGE** arguments that already exist.
- Evoke discrepancies between their current practices and their underlying values.





## Compassion.

- We work to actively promote the other's welfare.
- We give priority to the other's needs.
- We make an effort to have our heart in the right place



## Activity: MI Spirit or not?

### Example 1:

**Teacher:** *I'm so tired of trying and trying and having no success with Liam. Do you know we've tried at least eight different interventions since the start of the school year, and his behavior hasn't improved at all.*

**Coach:** *You're the kind of committed teacher who really goes the extra mile for your students, and it's hard on you when they're not experiencing success.*

**YES: MI Spirit - Acceptance, Compassion**



## Example 2:

**Teacher:** *I need to come up with some kind of plan to get me back on track. This child's escalating behaviors have thrown me for a loop. I can't think about anything else. What should I do?*

**Coach:** *First, I think it would really help you if you read these two excellent books on classroom behavior management, they helped me a lot. And maybe you could try to get your mind off school by doing yoga or meditation.*

**NO: not MI Spirit - Evocation, Collaboration, Autonomy**

**Coach:** *Wow. You're really committed to addressing this. Can you describe any successful strategies you've used in the past when other kids have escalated?*

### **Example 3:**

**Teacher:** *The principal gave me a list of things I have to do to keep my job. It's overwhelming. On top of managing this class of wild kids, I have to see an EAP therapist, attend two trainings, and schedule meetings with four students. It's too much. I just can't do it. But I don't want to lose my job.*

**Coach:** *I know it's really tough, and I'm sorry. But you have to do this if you want to keep your job. It sounds like you don't really have a choice anymore, so let me offer some support.*

**NO: not the MI Spirit – Autonomy**

**Coach:** *You feel overwhelmed, but you really value this job. Tell me a little bit about which of the tasks might be the most beneficial to start with?*

## **Example 4:**

**Teacher:** *I'm not going to use this ridiculous sticker chart anymore. I've tried it for two weeks, and she continues to act out. How on earth is it going to help a child whose grandmother screams and cusses and hits her all the time to get her to behave at home?*

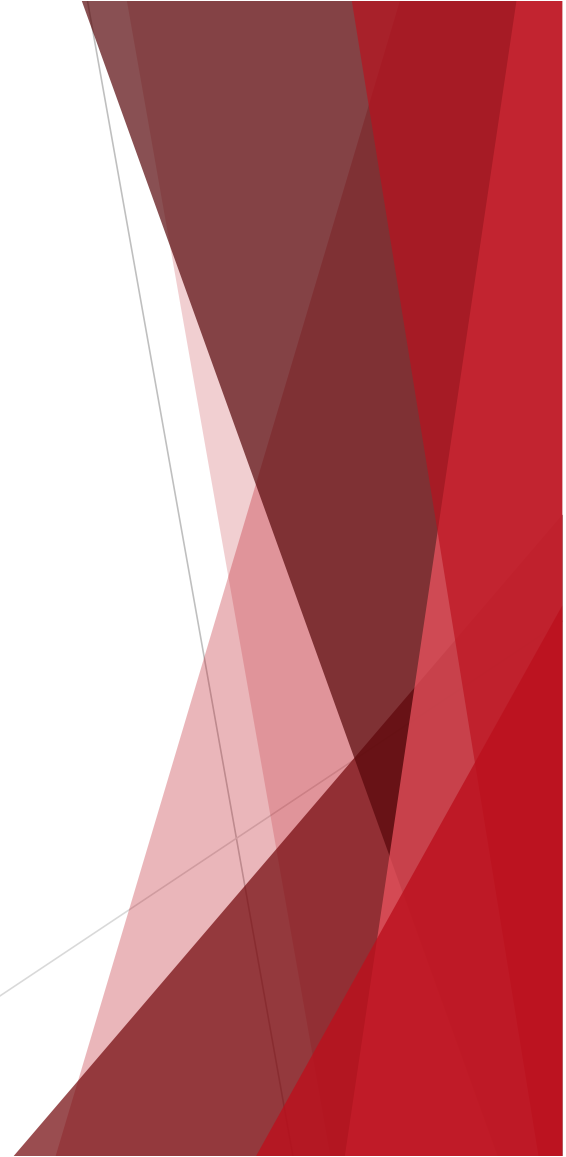
**Coach:** *You might be right. These ideas work for lots of children, but not for all of them. We've talked about some other ways to address the issue. What makes sense to you for us to try instead?*

**YES: MI Spirit - Evocation, Partnership, Autonomy**

## Technical Skills:

### OARS:

- **O**pen-ended questions
- **A**ffirmations
- **R**eflections
- **S**ummaries





Open-Ended Questions.



# Open-ended Questions.

A question that requires more than a one-word answer and elicits more thought.

- Keeps the conversation flowing, rather than shutting it down
- Invites and encourages elaboration, especially focused on change talk!!
- Avoids inadvertent assumptions or directing the conversation

## Examples

- How might these activities benefit your classroom?
- What does a typical day look like in your classroom?



Affirmations.



# Affirmations.

Offering emotional support or encouragement.

- They communicate acceptance or appreciation for one's behavior, beliefs, intentions, or values
- They build confidences
- They are more effective when:
  1. Genuine
  2. Specific



Reflections.  
Reflections.



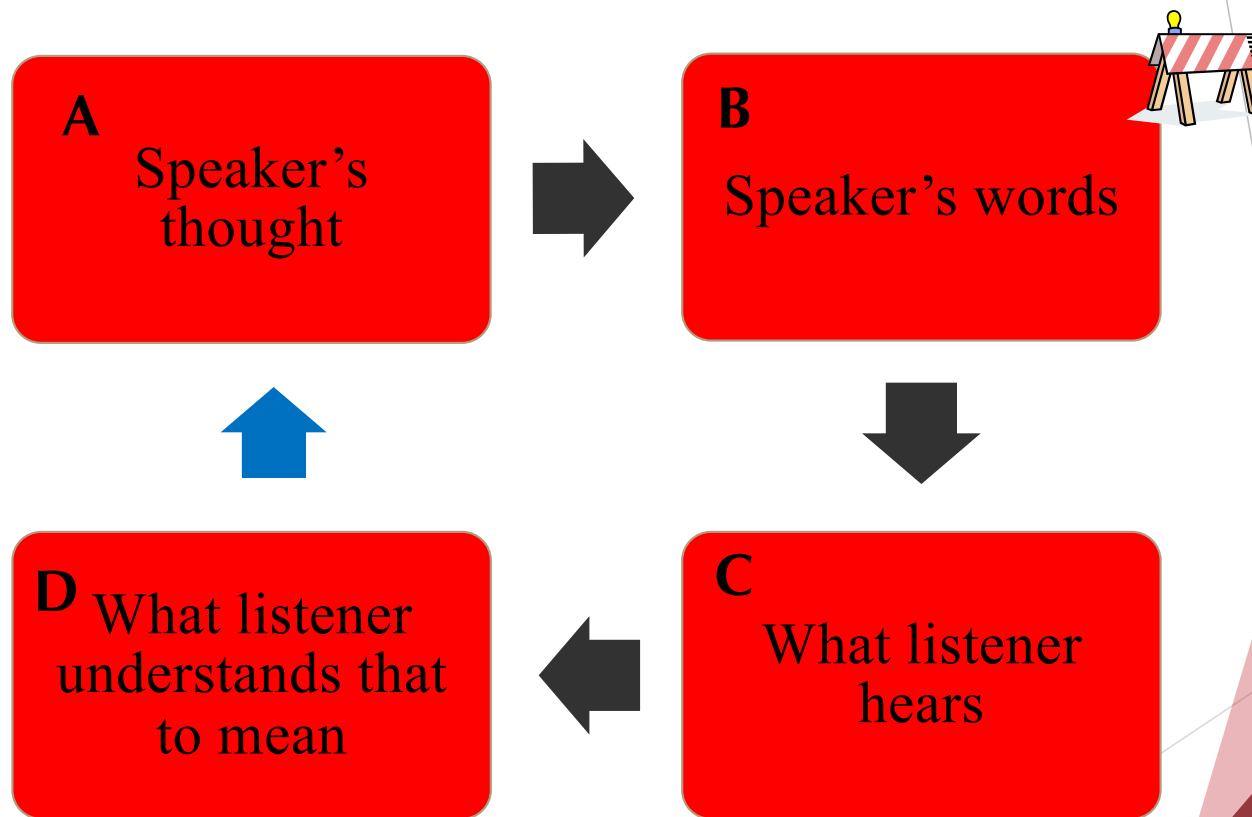
## Reflections:

Giving information back, like a mirror.

- Statements which paraphrase what the other person has said
- Let's the other person know you are not only listening, but attempting to *understand*



# Speaking and Listening Filters



*Gordon, 1970*

# Levels of Reflection

Simple Reflection (act as a mirror)

- Repetition
- Rephrase

Complex Reflection

- Expands the meaning
- Can be a paraphrase
- Continues the teacher's line of thinking
- Affective - Reflection of feeling

**Confused? Try pretending that you're explain to someone else what they said...**



## Group Practice 1:

**Teacher:** “I’ve been thinking a lot about the skills we discussed, and I think they might help me keep the students engaged during my lessons”

Respond to the statement with with a reflection.

Was it simple or complex?



## Group Practice 2:

**Teacher:** “I think positive feedback is an important strategy, but my students don’t really respond to it at all.”

Respond to the statement with with a reflection.

Was it simple or complex?





## Group Practice 3:

**Teacher:** “I’ve had a lot going on at home, and I think that it’s influenced my teaching. I still care about the class, but I feel less focused.”

Respond to the statement with with a reflection.

Was it simple or complex?

Summaries.



## Summaries.

Briefly reviewing the main points, as a check in process.

- Strategically pulling together significant ideas and information
- Typically involves some paraphrasing the session, and integrates bits and pieces of information the client has presented
- Used to begin or end a session or to transition from one topic to another



# Summaries

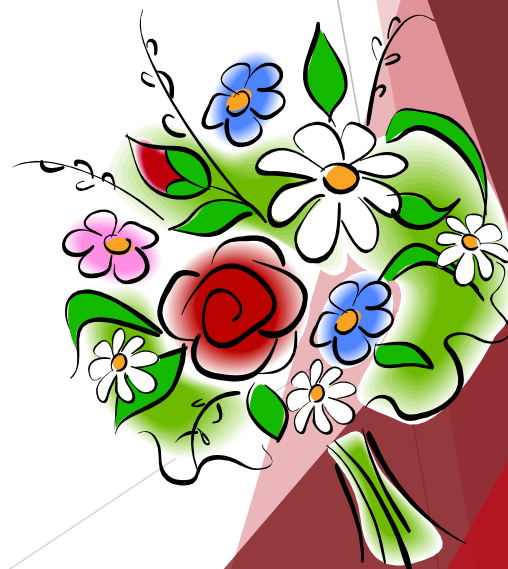
Collecting bits of change talk to offer back to the client for:

Small bouquets of change talk

- Acts as an Affirmation
- Refocus a conversation towards change

Larger bouquets

- To wrap up a conversation
- For transition to a different topic



## Recommended OARS Thresholds:

- For every **Question** you ask, use two **Reflections**
- For every **Simple Reflection**, use two **Complex Reflections**
- Always avoid non MI behaviors: confronting, advise giving, directing

## Role Play #1

The goal of this exercise is to help you recognize the OARS skills in practice. Take out an **OARS Exercise Worksheet**. Listen for examples of the coach utilizing **Open-Ended Questions, Affirmations, Reflections, and Summaries** throughout the conversation.



## The MI Processes:

- Engaging
- Focusing
- Evoking
- Planning



## Engaging

- Active listening
- Accurate empathy, striving to understand fully from the client's perspective without our own agenda
- A client-centered style: autonomy, collaboration
- Avoiding the righting reflex or "fixing".

Use the **OARS** to guide and understand BOTH sides of our teacher's ambivalence or dilemma.



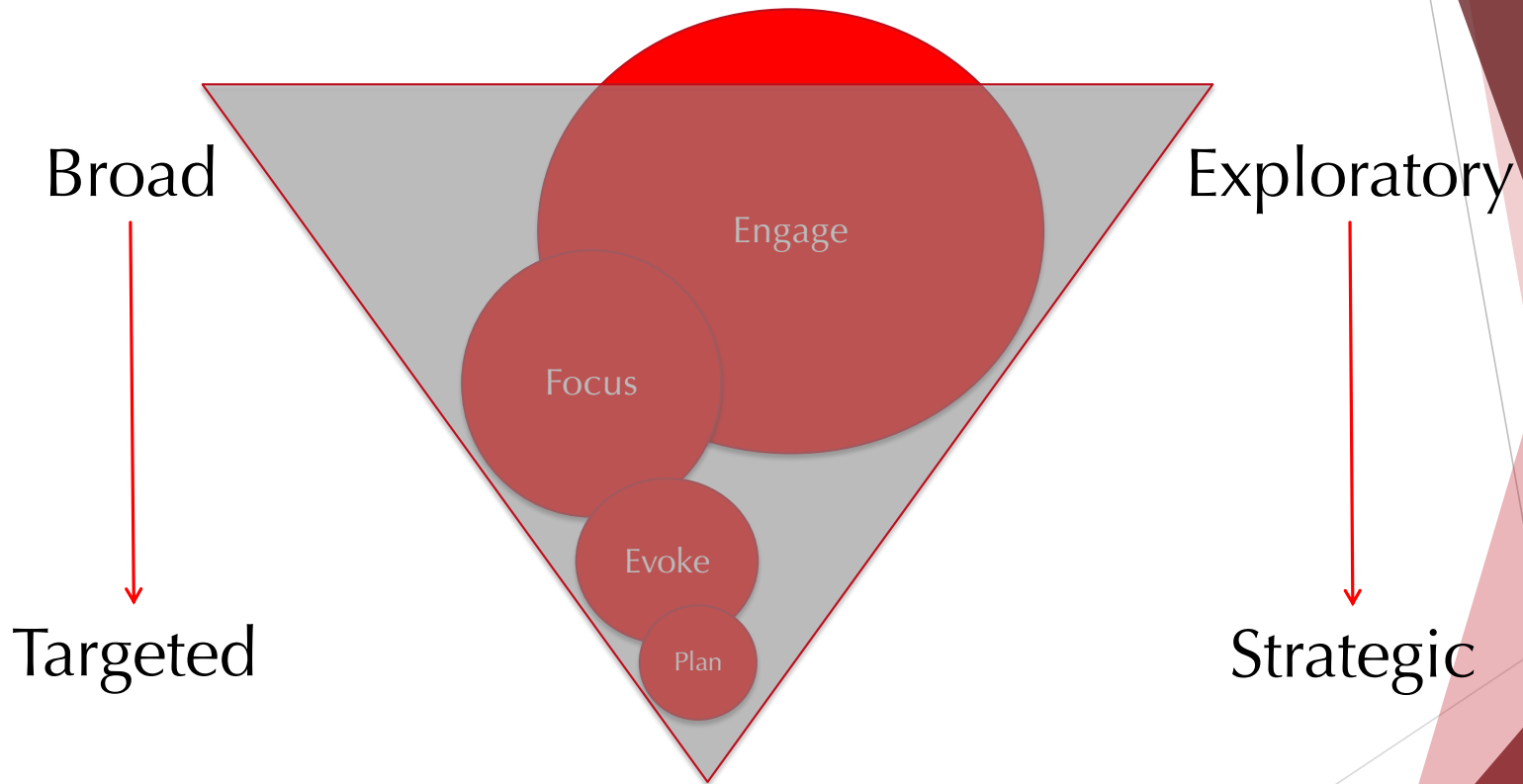


# Focusing.

- An ongoing process of seeking and maintaining direction towards change
- Consultant serves as **guide**
- The focusing process changes depending on the size of the menu of options...
- Effective coaching requires a change goal, a focus.



# Search for Target Behaviors



# Evocation

- To evoke is to ask questions, the answer to which is change talk.
- Consultant guides coach in **talking themselves into change.**
- Evocation requires a target behavior.
- We often refer to this as “thickening” their motivation.



## Evocative Questions

“Perhaps the simplest and most direct way of evoking change talk is to ask for it. Ask open-ended questions for which change talk is the answer.”

- Miller & Rollnick, 2012.

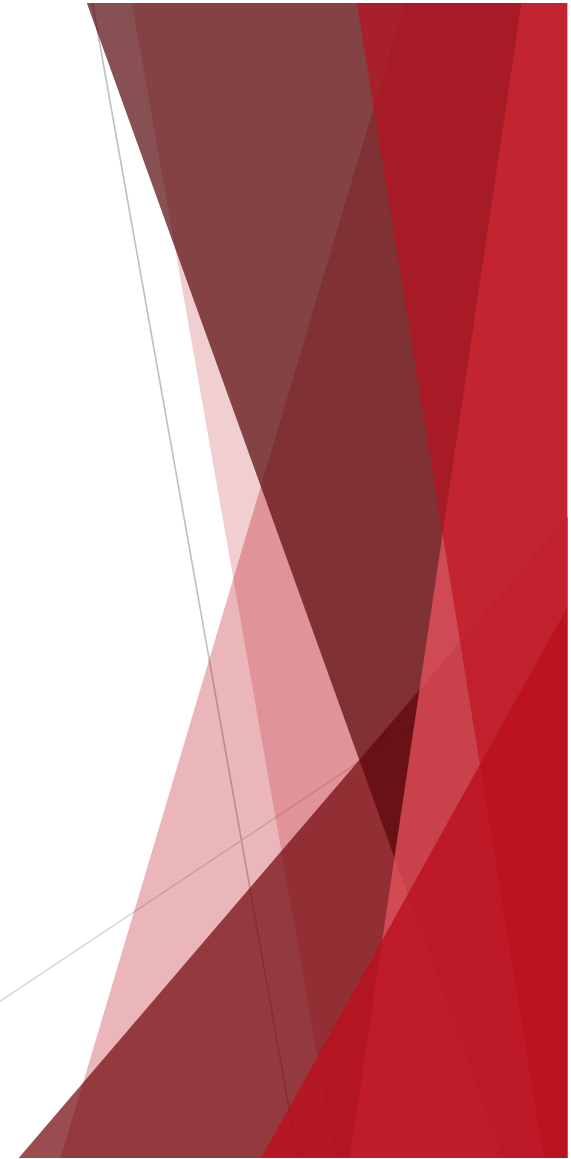
# Planning

- Asking key questions to determine readiness for action planning
- Consolidating commitment to change by selectively reinforcing commitment language.
- Assisting with change plans.
- Revisiting change plans to determine need for more work in former stages and/or changes/additions to the plan, etc.




## The processes are somewhat linear...

- Engaging necessarily comes first.
- Focusing (identifying a change goal) is a prerequisite for evoking
- Evoking reason for change is essential to developing a strong plan
- Planning, when prepared for well, comes later.





But are also  
interwoven...

- 
- ▶ Engaging continues throughout MI
  - ▶ Focusing is not a one-time event, sometimes we refocus, sometimes our focus may change
  - ▶ Evoking can begin very early



# Coaching model...

