Exerpt from: ***Motivational Interviewing In the Homebuilders Model***

<http://www.institutefamily.org/pdf/motivationalinterviewinghomebuilders.pdf>

**MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING: SPIRIT, PRINCIPLES, AND EARLY STRATEGIES**

Miller and Rollnick (2002) define Motivational Interviewing as “a client-centered, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence.” It includes a combination of philosophical and clinical aspects that together make up the whole of MI. Three primary aspects include: the “spirit” of MI, which forms the foundation for all of the clinical strategies; four general principles to guide the clinical practice; and five early methods for establishing rapport and eliciting motivational statements. The strategies are designed to help clients examine their ambivalence about change, with the goal of increasing their desire for change, their recognition of the importance of change, and their belief in their ability to make the change. As clients voice these arguments for change, their intention to change increases, which in turn leads to subsequent behavior change (MINT Bulletin, 2005).

**Spirit of MI**

The spirit of MI is critical to the implementation of the MI counseling style. If the other core clinical methods and strategies are conducted in a way that is inconsistent with the spirit, they are not considered to be MI. The spirit of MI includes the following key elements:

• Collaboration. Using a collaborative approach to working with clients, which involves a partnership that honors the client’s experiences and views. The emphasis is on creating an environment that is conducive to change, as opposed to convincing or coercing clients to change.

• Evocation. Eliciting the knowledge and perceptions of clients about their own situations. This involves drawing out resources, strengths, reasons for change, and intrinsic motivation to change that already exist in the client.

• Autonomy. Respecting the client’s autonomy by affirming the client’s right and capacity to choose whether or not to change in every situation.

**Four General Principles**

The four general principles provide areas for focus in motivational interviewing. Like the MI spirit, they guide the strategies and methods used for facilitating change in clients.

• Express Empathy. Using a counseling style that conveys understanding and acceptance of, though not necessarily agreement with, the client. Considered to be fundamental to MI, an empathic style is critical for understanding the client’s perspective without judging or criticizing. Reflective listening is the primary skill used to communicate empathetically with clients.

• Develop Discrepancies. Helping clients recognize discrepancies between their current behavior and their values and long-term goals. This helps clients explore both sides of their ambivalence, and contributes to clients’ belief in the importance of change.

• Roll with Resistance. Adjusting strategies so that resistance is not opposed. This is based on the idea that a clinician arguing for change, while the client argues against it, may move the client farther away from making a change.

• Support Self-Efficacy. Noting client strengths, and affirming client successes in making other similar changes or changes in other areas of life. This increases clients’ belief that they are capable of making and maintaining successful changes.

**Five Early Methods**

These methods are designed to help clients explore and resolve their ambivalence about making changes.

• Open Questions. Using questions that cannot be answered with one word. This keeps the focus broad and invites clients to explore topics extensively. Open questions are viewed as door openers, providing opportunities to use other early methods. Over-reliance on questions, even open questions, is discouraged.

• Reflective Listening. Responding to what the client says in a way that conveys understanding of the client’s feelings or the meaning of the client’s statements. This is considered to be one of the most important and sophisticated skills in MI; it includes paraphrasing what the client said, or guessing about the emotional impact on the client. Reflective listening is used to test the accuracy of the counselor’s understanding. It is used to 3 explore both sides of a client’s ambivalence. It is used to reinforce change talk.

• Affirming. Voicing support for the client’s strengths and personal efforts, within the context of societal and cultural norms. This increases the client’s confidence and self-efficacy.

• Summarizing. Using longer reflections to summarize what the client has discussed over a period of time. This is often used to reinforce important parts of the discussion, to link ideas with previous discussions, or to suggest a transition to another topic.

• Methods for Evoking Change Talk. A variety of strategies used to elicit “change talk” from the client. Change talk includes statements supporting or indicating desire for change, ability to change, reasons for making a change, and reasons not to stay the same. Strategies include but are not limited to eliciting from the client discussions of personal values, goals, strengths; the “good and the not so good” ideas about changing or not changing; and looking forward or backward to compare life with and without changes.