The need for a learning framework specifying essential competences for the effective use of motivational interviewing (MI) is a recurring theme in recent studies and systematic reviews. This document contains the first version of such a framework.

This (version 1) Competency Framework for Motivational Interviewing is based on research carried out by the author as part of a Master’s degree dissertation. Following a literature review of the topic area, definitions for each domain, element and item of competence were produced. An initial draft framework was created and reviewed by an international panel of experts whose views informed this version.

Some possible uses of this tool include:

Assessing learning needs, designing training and education programmes, promoting quality assurance in clinical practice, designing research interventions, guiding the commissioning of training and development programmes.

It is also the author’s intention to stimulate further discussion research and development of this tool towards creating a comprehensive, evidence – based learning framework for motivational interviewing.

Author: Liz Cornwallis
Email: info@cornwallisassociates.co.uk
Tel: + 44 (0)1786 822025
BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS TOOL

Motivational Interviewing is an evidence-based counselling approach for facilitating health related behaviour change (Lundahl & Burke, 2009; Lai et al 2010). Its increasing popularity with a range of practitioners has highlighted the need for an evidence-based learning framework to inform the development, delivery and evaluation of motivational interviewing training and educational programmes.

Miller and Rollnick (2009) suggest that clarifying the boundaries and competences of therapies such as motivational interviewing can promote quality assurance in research, clinical practice, and training. Madson et al, 2009; Soderlund et al, 2010 and Madson et al [in press] concur, but identify a lack of consensus about what elements are essential in learning motivational interviewing. This has led to repeated calls for the development of a learning framework focusing on competences for the effective use of motivational interviewing (Rosengren, 2009; Madson et al, 2009; Soderlund et al, 2010 and Madson et al [in press]). This approach reflects government policies in the UK (Skills for Health, 2011) where competency frameworks are increasingly used in education and workforce development. It also reflects discussions within the international Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT, 2010) on developing competences for practitioners and trainers.

This (version 1) Competency Framework for Motivational Interviewing is based on research that sought to answer the question: What are the essential competences for effective motivational interviewing practice? The study’s findings will be disseminated among the wider motivational interviewing practitioner, training and research community to stimulate further discussion and development of this framework.

The competences are organised under six broad headings known as Domains.

Within each domain there are a number of sub-headings known as Elements.

Each element is identified by a letter (from A-S).

The elements are further broken down into specific Items. Each item is identified alpha-numerically (e.g. A1, B4 etc.).

For more information on the research study or to offer feedback on how you are using the (Version 1) Competency Framework for Motivational Interviewing please contact the author Liz Cornwallis, Tel: +44 (0) 1786 822025 or Email: info@cornwallisassociates.co.uk
REFERENCES


Competence Framework for Motivational Interviewing

Competences for Motivational Interviewing
Competencies for Motivational Interviewing

DOMAIN 1 ENGAGING – THE RELATIONAL FOUNDATION
(person-centred style, listen understand dilemma and values, use of Open Questions, Affirmations, Reflective Listening and Summarising (OARS))

Element A: Overall Spirit of Motivational Interviewing
Openness to a way of thinking and working that is collaborative, honours the client's autonomy and self-direction, and is more about evoking than installing. Genuine interest in the client’s experience and perspectives.

A1 Empathy: Makes an effort to understand the client's perspective, feelings and 'world view'.

A2 Acceptance: Demonstrates unconditional positive regard. Relates to clients in a warm, encouraging and accepting manner.

A3 Support: Supports the client by making sympathetic, compassionate, or understanding comments.

A4 Collaboration: Negotiates with the client and avoids an authoritarian stance. Treats the client as an equal partner and creates a positive environment for change.

A5 Evocation: Draws out ideas and solutions from clients. Evokes clients’ reasons and potential methods for change.

A6 Autonomy: Recognises that clients are ultimately responsible for choosing their own paths. Emphasises the client’s freedom of choice, autonomy and personal responsibility.

A7 Reducing Discord: Recognises any apparent discord in the practitioner/client relationship. Uses strategies to reduce discord and re-engage with the client.

NB. Discord can arise at any stage in the conversation, not just in initial engagement.

Element B: Client Centred Counselling Skills (Open Questions, Affirmations, Reflection, Summarising) Uses client-centered counselling skills to provide a supportive and facilitative atmosphere in which clients can safely explore their experience and ambivalence.

B1 Open Questions: Uses a range of open-ended questions to seek information, invite the client's perspective or encourage self-exploration of the client’s thoughts and feelings towards the topic.

B2 Affirmations: Affirms the client by saying something that recognises and reinforces the client's strengths, abilities and/or efforts.

B3 Simple Reflection: Uses simple reflective listening statements to convey understanding or facilitate discussion.

B4 Complex Reflection: Uses complex reflections (containing significantly more or different content from what the client actually said) to add meaning or emphasis.

B5 Summarising: Summarises what the client has said at key points in the discussion to link together or juxtapose concepts, direct the conversation, ask key questions and check practitioner’s understanding of the client’s perspective.
DOMAIN 2  FOCUSING
(agenda setting, finding a focus, information and advice)

Element C: Permission Seeking

C1 Invites the client to talk about behaviour change, making it clear that the client is not obliged to make any decisions regarding their behaviour.

Element D: Agenda Setting (or agenda matching)

D1 Negotiates a specific agenda for the discussion in partnership with the client.

Element E: Direction

E1 Maintains appropriate focus on the agreed agenda or concerns directly related to it (though able to adapt to client’s needs and situation).

Element F: Information and Advice

F1 Seeks client’s (implicit or explicit) permission before offering information or advice.
F2 Asks what the client already knows about the topic and what else they want to know.
F3 Provides information or advice that is sensitive to client concerns and understanding.
F4 Asks what the client thinks or feels about the information or advice provided.

DOMAIN 3  EVOKING –THE TRANSITION TO MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI) (selective eliciting, selective responding, selective summaries)

Element G: Developing Discrepancy

G1 Explores discrepancies between clients’ current behaviour or situation and their goals, values or self-perceptions.

Element H: Recognising and Responding to Change Talk

H1 Listens for and identifies client “change talk” (i.e. client statements about desire, ability, reasons and need for change).
H2 Responds to change talk with elaborating questions, affirmation, reflections or summaries to elicit the client’s intrinsic motivation for change.
Element I: Eliciting and Strengthening Change Talk

I1 Elicits and reinforces client change talk by strategic use of the client centred OARS skills, aimed at increasing client’s strength of commitment to change.

Element J: Reducing Sustain Talk

J1 Responds to client sustain talk (arguments against change or in favour of the status quo) in a manner that reflects and respects it without reinforcing it.

NB. Sustain talk can arise at any time in the conversation, not just when evoking change talk.

DOMAIN 4 PLANNING-THE BRIDGE TO CHANGE (negotiating a change plan, consolidating commitment)

Element K: Recognising Readiness to Change

K1 Recognises signs that the client may be ready to commit to implementing change.

Element L: Transitional Summary

L1 Summarises the client’s perceptions of the issue, including reasons or need for change and ambivalence about change. Restates client’s desire, ability and commitment to change.

Element M: Consolidating Commitment

M1 Uses evocative (key) questions to encourage client commitment talk.

Element N: Responding to Ambivalence or Reinforcing Commitment

N1 Listens for client’s response to key questions. If the client is still ambivalent, honours their autonomy and reverts to the use of client centred OARS skills.

N2 If the client makes commitment statements, reflects and reinforces these statements.
Element O: Developing a Change Plan

O1 Works in partnership with the client using OARS skills to help him/her identify goals and develop a specific change plan.

Element P: Reaffirming Commitment to the Change Plan

P1 Summarises the specific change plan and asks a simple closed question such as “Is that what you plan to do?” NB. If client commitment is already evident this step may be unnecessary.

P2 Responds to any client ambivalence using OARS skills, especially reflection. If client is not ready to commit, uses OARS skills to “leave the door open” for client to revisit the issue.

DOMAIN 5 GENERIC COMPETENCES

Element Q: Professional and Ethical Practice

Q1 Demonstrates knowledge of and ability to work within professional and ethical guidelines (relevant to practitioner’s role)

Element R: Knowledge of Basic Principles

R1 Demonstrates knowledge of basic MI principles, skills and strategies and ability to explain rationale for use of MI to clients.

DOMAIN 6 META-COMPETENCES

(ability to call on relevant aspects of MI knowledge and skills to plan and, where necessary, adapt the intervention to the needs of individual clients).

Element S: Implementing MI

S1 Implements MI in a manner consonant with its underlying philosophy.
S2 Structures sessions and maintains appropriate pacing
S3 Selects and skilfully applies the most appropriate MI skills and strategies.