

Principles of Motivational Interviewing

- ❑ Explore the person's thoughts and feelings about the good and not-so-good things about the issue (e.g., about being very overweight, about smoking, about drinking harmfully, etc.)
- ❑ Use reflective listening: listen to what the person says, and then summarize it back (e.g., "So, what you're saying is..." or "So, it seems that on the one hand it's... and on the other it's...")
- ❑ Show respect and willingness to understand the person's perspective. You do not have to agree, but it is important not to show any disapproval or blame.
- ❑ Give accurate health information that is relevant to him/her.
- ❑ Help the person clarify his/her personal goals or role in the community— what he/she wants to be or what he/she wants to do in life. You could ask "what's important to you?" Then, help the person to think about whether what he/she is doing now is helping get there. The person needs to see the conflict or discrepancy within himself/herself.
- ❑ Avoid arguing— this will encourage the person to defend his/her opinion and behavior patterns.
- ❑ Help the person to look at his/her behavior and how it impacts others.
- ❑ At times, the person may be unwilling to consider the effects of his/her behavior. Go with this and acknowledge the person's ambivalence or reluctance. Try another way to move forward with the intervention. It is important not to impose new views or goals, but rather to invite the person to consider new information or perspectives.
- ❑ Encourage the person to generate the proposed solution. This means he or she will be more likely to follow it through. Help the person to set realistic personal goals for making changes.
- ❑ Try to build the person's confidence. The person needs to believe he or she has the ability to achieve his/her goals and change behavior.
- ❑ Ask the person what things he/she may find difficult about changing.
- ❑ Offer help and support. Encourage him/her to identify others in the community who may be able to offer support. (e.g., "Are there other people who have changed, too?")

References:

Miller, W.R. and Rollnick, S. 1991.
Rollnick S. and Miller, W.R. 1995.