- [Justin] Hello, and thank you for joining me today. This video is meant to be an introduction to motivational interviewing, which I will also be referring to as MI throughout the video. Hopefully this is enough to get you started, but if you're interested in learning more, check out the resources noted at the end of this slide show, and if at all possible seek a full MI workshop.

My most recent workshop was with Dr. William Matulich in 2017, and his presentation helped inspire much of what you'll see today. You'll find the link to his website and credits to his presentation at the end of this slideshow. And as it was explained to me in the beginning, you'll see that many of the MI concepts are simple, but implementing them is not always easy and will take some practice.

So I won't bore you by reading this entire slide but my name is Justin Clark and I am a vocational rehabilitation counselor here in Davenport. I was introduced to motivational interviewing during my undergrad years at the University of Northern Iowa, and I have been using it in practice for the past 16 years or so. I've worked in substance abuse, child welfare, disability, and vocational services throughout my career, and have always found MI to be an effective way to assist clients with change.

Dr. William Miller and Stephen Rollnick developed many of the founding principles of MI, and this is their definition of motivational interviewing. They say MI is a collaborative goal-oriented method of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen an individual's motivation for and movement toward a specific goal by listening and exploring a person's own arguments for change.

So why would we want to use motivational interviewing? The first thing is that it's client-centered and empowering. Secondly, it honors the autonomy and self-determination. And autonomy is a really key concept here so I wanted to spend some time talking about that. Humans develop a strong psychological need for autonomy early on, so if that's not satisfied, the odds of achieving a desired result are going to be much lower. So if you take, for instance, my three-year-old son, he's likely to have a complete meltdown if I were to order him to pick up his toys and then brush his teeth. But what if I were to say, hey buddy, would you like to pick up toys or brush your teeth first? I provide him the ability to choose the order of which the tasks are completed, this is going to honor both his personal autonomy and his self-determination, and both tasks are usually going to be completed without incident.

Motivational interviewing is more effective than confrontation, information, and advice giving. It's also going to increase the buy-in of job seekers, and lead to better plans and longer-lasting changes. And depending on what you're doing, less recidivism is another key component to this.

And lastly it's an evidence-based practice. It was initially used for substance abuse treatment. And it was observed to be an extremely effective way of assisting them with substance abuse treatment and has since been adopted in many other professions like the medical field, and of course vocational rehabilitation here.

So when can we use MI? Literally anytime you are charged with assisting someone to change a behavior. This could be from intake to closure. MI is going to help us clearly define strengths and achievable employment goals through a partnership with your job seeker. Motivational interviewing skills can be used with job seekers who are experiencing ambivalence towards change. And ambivalence simply means that arguments for and against change are going to exist simultaneously with our clients. MI can be particularly helpful with difficult cases where progress has stalled or regressed. So if I were to pare down the definition that we saw before from Miller and Rolnick, and kind of break it down to something that works for us today, I might say motivational interviewing is a collaborative way of exploring change with job seekers who are experiencing ambivalence. Change is hard. And we don't make changes until the discomfort of the status quo surpasses the discomfort of the proposed change. So our job seekers are likely going to come in for reasons for and against employment. Even more challenging, you might serve some individuals who are either formally or informally mandated to participate in services.

So now that we have a basic understanding of what motivational interviewing is, I would like to do a little thought experiment to help us get into the mindset of a job seeker. So I certainly hope this isn't the case, but let's imagine for a moment that your supervisor has come to you and said, our administration has done some research and learned the motivational interviewing will improve employment outcomes dramatically. I'm going to need you to watch this video and begin using MI as your primary tool starting tomorrow. Now imagine the thoughts and feelings that might come up after hearing this directive. Some of the things you might be thinking are that I've always done it this way, why should I learn a new way of communicating with my job seekers? Maybe I've always had great success so why would I change now? You might say, this is not applicable to my job. Maybe you're a clerical staff and you think, well I don't work directly with clients one on one, so this doesn't make sense for me to be learning. You might say, this is definitely not going to work with my most difficult clients. Another example might be that all this talking is going to slow my progress towards these mandated deadlines that are non-negotiable, and I'm going to end up falling behind. So hopefully by the end of this video, you'll have seen a tool or a technique that you can pick up today and actually make your job easier and less stressful.

MI is not a magic bullet and not every technique will fit your style. Feel free to pick and choose the ones that do. So moving on to this spirit of MI. There's four components to the spirit of MI, the first being partnership. When using MI, we're having an active collaboration between two experts, yourself and the job seeker. Partnership is critical for change because neither of us is able to accomplish this task on our own. So the practitioner, you, are responsible for creating a positive interpersonal relationship with your job seeker that will lead to an environment that's conducive to change.

The second part is acceptance. Acceptance is going to promote this job seeker's autonomy and strengths. So this means unconditional acceptance of where they are today. It doesn't mean that you approve of the job seeker's actions or behaviors. In fact, our own personal approval or disapproval is irrelevant. Instead, promote the job seeker's autonomy, empathize, and provide affirmations to the job seeker regarding their strengths and efforts towards change. Realize that the moment that we attempt to change the clients or fixing or resolving a problem, acceptance is going to be halted 'cause now we're asking them to change.

The third is compassion. In the MI world, compassion is not a personal feeling. Our agenda is a distant second. So we're going to focus on what will be of value to the job seeker to decide if work is right for them. This could be a hard concept to grasp because we're in the business of finding jobs for people. However, we must realize that in the end we can't physically force somebody to work if it's not in their best interest.

The last is evocation. This is the idea that the job seeker actually has the knowledge, insight, and motivation inside themselves to make these changes. So we are going to support them by creating engaging conversations that pull these strengths out into the open. And this bring us to a key skill with MI and that's empathy. Empathy is defined as the ability to understand and feel the emotions of another person. So this is not sympathy. We could understand why a person feels a certain way without actually feeling sorry for them. So this is going to allow us to acknowledge and understand a job seeker's feelings about their current situation, as well as the proposed change. It's going to help us better understand and deal with the ambivalence that we are going to encounter throughout the process.

So moving on to the stages of change, Prochaska and DiClemente have this graphic here. What we're going to do is I'll run through these stages of change individually, but we'll talk more about them here in a moment.

So the first is pre-contemplation. And then we move into contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and relapse. Knowing which stage the job candidate is occupying is going to help us select the best tool for positive change. If someone comes in, they're already in the action stage filling out applications, getting ready for interviews, we need to get out of their way, come alongside them and help them out. It's going to look very different than somebody coming in in a pre-contemplation stage. So I find out that the MI is more effective in the earliest stages of change because that's when we're going to encounter the most ambivalence. And you can note that this is presented in a circle, I think out of convenience, but change is often not linear and they go back and forth between these different stages of change. So the first stage of change is pre-contemplation. A guy might come in and say, my wife has really been on my case about getting back to work. I told her not to worry about it, but she makes me come to this appointment. This guy is not considering change and he's not interested in alternative action or behaviors. What we're going to do here is we're going to validate his lack of readiness and encourage evaluation of the current situation and behavior. So an example of that might be, you're an adult and you will be the one to decide if and when you are ready to start looking for a job. Other questions we might ask to kind of probe into that a little bit are, what concerns do you have about your current situation? What is it about not being employed that your wife might see as a concern? And how has not working affected you? This is going to be a great opportunity for us to build some rapport using empathy and some OARS skills that we're going to discuss in a moment. We're going to build that environment for change.

We want to be careful to avoid the common pitfalls that I'll get into here in the next slide. There's lots of pitfalls that come with using motivational interviewing. Some things that we want to stay out of. So I'm going to do four of the ones that I think are the most common in practice. The first is going to be the closed question or assessment trap. Using closed questions is going to block exploration and it's going to promote disengagement. When we get into the intakes or assessment processes that we all have to do, these are unavoidable but we can do what we can to make it more of a conversation. So we might say, I've got some paperwork that we need to get done today but I'm sure that you would have some things on your mind. Where would you like to start? The second is the expert trap. We want to stay out of this one because this is thinking that we have the best answers or next steps for the job seeker, thinking that we know what's best for them. This is going to invite dependency, it's going to take away from self-efficacy and the autonomy that we're working to build. The expert might also end up feeling like they are working harder than the job candidate. The third is the premature focus trap. We all have deadlines that we're trying to meet, so we're trying to write plans quickly, get people out there in actions steps and get moving. But creating a plan and next steps too soon is going to create some anxiety with them, because we're going to ignore their ambivalence, we're going to halt the exploration process, and this is going to end up undermining the commitment to the plan. And the last one that we'll talk about is the righting reflex. The righting reflex is our natural reflex as compassionate helpers to try to make things right. When we see a problem we want to make everybody happy. This is again inadvertently taking away autonomy and self-determination from our job seeker. We should instead be working to empower the job seeker to find their own solution.

Alright, so back to the stages of change, the second stage is going to be contemplation. So our job seeker from before might say, sure, I'd like to work eventually, I just don't see why I need to rush into it. I want to find the right job where I'm able to keep it for a while. So now he's ambivalent about change. He sees there might be some benefit to it, but he's sitting on the fence and he's really not considering changing in the near future. We're going to continue to validate his lack of readiness, and we're going to encourage the exploration of the pros and cons for working. An example of that might be, I'm hearing that you're thinking about working, but you're not ready to take action right now. We might also say something like, well it sounds like longevity is something that you value in a career, so we're going to highlight a value of his, highlight a strength to get him thinking more about change.

The third stage is going to be preparation. He might come in and say, I really need to find a job, even if this isn't my dream job. Do you think there might be a part-time job out there for me? Now, he's considering the change and he's testing the waters. He's planning to act soon, possibly within the next month or so. So what we're going to do here is identify and assist with problem solving obstacles to changing. So find barriers that might be in his way and help identify supports in the individual's life. So we might say, you're feeling good about your decision to work. You believe that part-time work might be the first step toward your goal of self-sufficiency. Preparation is a stage to consider plan building. We're going to emphasize strengths and start slowly to avoid that premature focus trap that we talked about. If we pile on the tasks and responsibilities at this time, we're likely to see a backslide.

The fourth stage of change will get us into action. This is the individual who has been practicing a new behavior for three to six months. He might come in and he might say, I've had three interviews over the past few months but I haven't got a job offer. I did have what I think was a very promising interview on Monday though. So he's making progress, he's taking action, moving towards employment. At this point we want to bolster his self-confidence and his self-efficacy for dealing with obstacles that we know are going to come up. The interview that goes by and you don't get the job, that's just an obstacle, so we want to continue to focus on personal and social supports that are going to help them through these things. An example might be, what obstacles have been easy to overcome, and what obstacles have been the most challenging? Help him process through those things. Other responses might be, what skills have you picked up through the job seeking process? So we're looking for strengths there. Another might be, what went well during Monday's interview? That helps him kind of debrief, talk about what went well so we can reinforce that confidence that he gained. And the last one is, how has your progress been received at home? This is something that I'm wanting to tread lightly with, but he had mentioned earlier that his wife was upset at him for not working. Now he's been making steps towards change, and if you've built enough rapport with this man, you might be able to ask him, how has it been received at home? To get at how are the emotions of this change helping him out at home.

The fifth stage of change is maintenance. This is somebody who has continued commitment to a new behavior for longer than six months. So our job seeker comes in and he says, I've been on the job for six months now. I've just got off probation period last week. So, we're going to reinforce internal rewards, discuss coping, with relapses, and continue to confirm personal and social supports. So an example of this might be, what has helped you be so successful in maintaining this job? So as I said before, MI is going to be most valuable to us in those earlier stages. Now we're just sort of confirming things that we've done in the past and supporting him to make sure that he's ready in case he does have a barrier or two pop up.

The sixth stage of change is relapse. He might come back in and say, I skipped two days at work without calling in. My supervisor says one more and I'm out the door. My wife says that I'm back to being my lazy self. So we see that he's resuming some of his old behavior patterns. At this point in time we're going to try to evaluate some triggers that contributed to the old behavior patterns. We're going to reassess his motivation and barriers, and emphasize past successes. We're going to plan stronger coping skills. An example of this might be, has there been a time recently that you felt like skipping work but didn't? If so, what kept that from happening? We may also say, it sounds like you would be upset if you lost this job. Why is it important for you to stay employed? So these are the six stages of change. Remember that a job seeker might jump from stage to stage throughout the life of the case, so keep tabs on where they are during any given session.

Now let's take a look at some key MI skills that can help move job seekers from one stage to the next. A nifty way to look at some key skills for motivational interviewing is this acronym OARS. The O in oar stands for open-ended questions. The A for affirmations. R for reflections. And S for summaries. You will notice that these are really two distinct skills. They have open-ended questions and then affirmations, reflective statements, and summarizing statements are all really forms of reflections.

Before we explore OARS further, let's take a look at another key skill that can help us maintain steady progress, and avoid the peaks and valleys that might come. So a second key skill is equipoise. Equipoise with regard to MI refers to maintaining a balanced and non-judgmental approach throughout the working relationship. Guiding language supporting one particular choice or another can upset this balance and negatively impact this relationship. So we're going to stay away from I statements. If the job seeker feels judgment, either positive or negative, you're likely to encounter an increase in ambivalence. Think of that as a tug of war. If I am constantly arguing for finding work, oh you should really find work, you're going to love the money aspect, you're going to enjoy the freedom, I'm giving him all these reasons to change, the job seeker is inevitably going to be tugging back the other way because he feels so much pressure going one way. They're going to try to balance that out. So our job as a practitioner is to stay in that middle and sort of explore both the pros and cons of change at the same time. We're going to keep our cool, particularly with job seekers who are reaction seeking. So there's two main types of reflections, simple and complex. In a simple reflection we're going to repeat a statement from the job seeker and maybe rephrase the statement using synonyms, but we're basically going to keep it the same. The second type is complex. And we may paraphrase, focus on the emotions behind the statement, or exaggerate in order to garner additional information. Sentence stems for this might be like, it sounds like, you are wondering if, if I'm hearing you correctly. These are all starts to reflections.

The S in OARS is summaries. Summaries can be used throughout any session to check for understanding, find change talk and highlight discrepancies. We can look at summaries as collecting flowers to form a bouquet. So we're really looking for change talk. Reasons for change, motivations for change, strengths that are going to allow that change. As we have a conversation with our job seeker, we're going to pull these things out and then include those in the summaries that we have. When you hear motivation for change, take note of it, and these are the golden nuggets that we're looking for. And we're going to end that summary with a close and a question like, did I get it right? Or am I understanding it correctly? Examples of summaries. A brief summary that we might use in the middle of a conversation would be, well it sounds like you take pride in providing for your family. Now working has been difficult for you to bear, especially seeing how it impacts your wife. And a more inclusive wrap up summary towards the end of our session might say, your health has improved so you decided to come to see if working is a realistic goal for you. Working is important to you because supporting your family financially will reduce the household stress. Is there anything that I've left out? So that's it for OARS. These basic skills, when used properly, can be extremely valuable in creating solid employment plans and navigating the inevitable barriers that come up throughout a case.

Next, I like to spend some time talking about ambivalence towards change. What can we do when the job seeker's refusing to participate, or otherwise not making progress towards their goals? So we should really consider ambivalence to change as a natural and predictable precursor to change. Think about some of the changes that you've made in your life, whether they be big or small. Maybe you wanted to exercise more. Maybe you were able to quite smoking, or maybe you bought a new car. It's likely that you experienced at least some ambivalence towards these changes. In order to facilitate change, the MI practitioner will explore the ambivalence to reveal the job seeker's internal motivation for the desired change. You can think of this as ballroom dancing versus wrestling. We don't oppose the energy, but we're going to gently redirect it in a productive way. Or you can think back to the tug of war analogy. If we combat status quo talk with reasons for change, we are likely going to hear stronger status quo talk. So let's talk about sustain talk versus discord. Sustain talk is recognizable as client speech that favors the status quo over moving towards change. So this is the opposite of the change talk that we're trying to get. They might say, I don't need to find a job. I'm perfectly happy being unemployed. On the flip side, discord is interpersonal behavior that reflects dissonance in the working relationship. These behaviors might include arguing, interrupting, discounting, or completely ignoring you. You want to observe the ambivalence that we're seeing and find out which category it falls under. Sustain talk, like I said, is the opposite of change talk, and it will need to be explored further. Discord, however, let's us know that something is not functioning properly within our working relationship. You probably need to use our OARS techniques and seek to better understand the job seeker's position with genuine empathy before we can move forward.

So reflections can be an easy and effective way to explore ambivalence. There are many techniques for this in MI but I'll share the three that I find most useful in my practice. Simple reflections are going to help us define the resistance and buy time to plan our next intervention. So the job seeker might come in and say, I'm going to collect disability benefits until my dying day. These statements of ambivalence can sometimes be shocking by design, and simple reflection can help us maintain equipoise moving forward. So we might say, at this point you are going to collect disability benefits for as long as possible. It kind of takes the sting out of the initial statement. The second is amplified reflections. So with this we're going to exaggerate the sustain talk and test the job seeker's commitment to the previous statement. Again, they might say, I'm going to collect disability benefits until my dying day. And we might respond by saying, you don't see any purpose in working. This amplified reaction exaggerates the client's statement and their response is either going to confirm their commitment to the status quo, or it could elicit change talk by correcting our reflection. When we make that reflection they may say, well no, that's not exactly true. I do see some value in working, and now we're talking about change talk. Or they stay staunch in that and now we know that we need to go back and probably use some OARS techniques to get back on track. You can practice using these reflections at work, with your significant other, or your friends until they feel more natural to you. Once you get accustomed to thinking this way, you can reframe just about any statement that is thrown your direction.

Okay, so the very last thing that I'm going to share are some basic MI tools that you can use to help work around ambivalence in a tough case. This is actually a picture of a poster that I have on my wall in the office. It actually serves as a little bit of a discussion piece. People will often ask me what that is, and it gives me a good segue to get into using it with them. I use this on a daily basis. What we're going to do here is look at importance in confidence. In order to change, we're going to have to be both confident in our ability to do the change, but also it's going to have to be important to us. So we might say on a scale from zero to 10, how important is it for you to find work? And then we'll ask, on a scale from zero to 10 again, how confident are you in your ability to find work? Follow up questions for this are going to be, let's say somebody chose a three. We might say, why are you at a three and not a zero? So we're looking for change talk even though they do have a low rating. We're going to find out what it is that keeps them from being lower on the scale. Conversely, we might say, what would it take to move you from a six to an eight? So we're looking at reasons that they might be able to move forward on a scale. They might say, consistent daycare, maybe if I got a refill on my anxiety medication, maybe if I got my driver's license. These might be ways that I could move higher on the scale. That gives us goals to work towards. So scaling questions can create data points that we can compare from appointment to appointment. The conversation started by these questions will be filled with both change talk and sustain talk. So we need to pick through that and help determine what areas need attention moving forward. Another thing that this can do is develop discrepancy. This happens quite often, actually. We might be able to say, I see that you've rated both your importance in your confidence as 10, and you weren't able to fill out any applications since our last meeting two weeks ago. Now we'll let that hang in the air, because silence is a key tool for processing. They're going to come up with something if given time, so they'll be able to tell you why they're rating themselves so high but yet not taking action. Developing that discrepancy really starts that conversation.

Another one that I use often is the miracle or magic wand question. You can feel free to change this question as needed to fit your style and your job seeker. The goal here is that we're going to try to tap into a more creative and less burdened state of mind. So we might say, suppose that a miracle takes place tonight, and when you wake up, your most positive dreams have come true. Follow up questions might be, what is the first thing that you notice? What has changed? Who is with you? And how does your family react to these changes? This technique can be used when a job seeker is so focused on problem talk that they are having trouble envisioning a possible change. Another good question is what I call the better days question. This is a vague example, but do you remember a time when things were going better for you? A more specific example to working might be, was there a time that you were happy on the job? Follow up questions to that are going to be, what was different, with you, with the environment? What were you doing to overcome barriers? How were you feeling at that time? And was anyone else sharing in your success? We're going to use these past successes to build them up for positive changes.

Remember that relapse is also a stage of change and can be overcome using the job seeker's strengths. Okay, so the decisional balance worksheet. This is a wonderful tool to use when the job seekers are perhaps not following through with expectations and spending the majority of the session using sustain talk. Now the order that we ask these questions is important. We're going to work from the upper left quadrant and go down and around to the upper right quadrant. So the first question would be, what is something good that could come from not taking action? I'll throw you an example in here. If I was working with a young man he might say, I love video games, my couch is really comfy, and I enjoy my alone time. These are all reasons that not taking action is good. Now the second box we're going to ask, what is something bad that could come from not taking action? And that same young man might say, my parents are talking about kicking me out if I don't find a job before I turn 20. That's a pretty bad thing that could happen if we don't take action, right? So we move over to box number three. What is something bad that could come from taking this action? And that same young man might say, I could apply for a bunch of jobs and not get them, or I could completely embarrass myself in a job interview. Plus, I'm going to lose out on video game time. And finally, we'll get to that fourth quadrant, and we might say, what is something good that can come from taking this action? At this point they've unburdened themselves of all the reasons not to change, so they're more likely to begin exploring the positive aspects of seeking employment. If we can get the job seeker to come up with their own arguments for change, we can use their own words to help them move toward employment. Now think about how different that would be than you telling them the reasons for change, telling them why they need to work. And that's everything that I have to share with you today. I hope that you've been able to pick up a technique or a tool that you can use to make your job a little bit easier.

One of the best things about using motivational interviewing from a practitioner standpoint is that it frees you of the burden to force change on your job seeker. Letting them come up with the reasons to find employment enables you to come alongside them in a more supporting role instead of that expert role in which you are expected to solve all their employment problems.

If you're interested in learning more about MI, I would suggest picking up Miller and Rollnick's Helping People Change. I've also included a few MI websites on my last slide that are full of great information. Seek out people in your organization who have some knowledge of MI and share your successes and failures with them. Practicing processing with others is truly the best way to learn which MI techniques are going to work for you. I wish you the very best of luck in practice. Thank you very much.