

ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING & ACTIVATING SUPPORT:

Tips for eliciting buy-in from leaders for organization-wide Motivational Interviewing Training

When trying to “make your case” for organization-wide Motivational Interviewing training, we can start by using many of the same MI skills that you would use with patients.

Elicit information from leaders regarding what they currently know about Motivational Interviewing. If they don't know much about the MI approach or philosophy we might consider:



- Asking if they'd like to read something about MI - [Motivational Interviewing in Health Care](#) or [Listening Well](#), both by William Miller, are both short and helpful texts. It can be helpful to match your recommendation with the personality of the leader. For example, [Motivational Interviewing in Health Care](#) has a more technical tone while [Listening Well](#) has a more humanistic, empathic, tone.
- Asking if it would be possible to conduct a short (1 hour) “Introduction to MI” workshop with executive leaders.

Ask about their hesitations to supporting MI workshops **and explore any of their perceived barriers** to a wide-spread MI training program within the organization.



If the barrier is time, we can offer to conduct workshops in 1-hour increments or during existing staff meetings.



If the barrier is bandwidth, we can share that MI workshops are supportive to building the resilience of staff, reducing the negative impacts of the fast paced, high volume, work environment and that they increase rewarding interactions between co-workers.



If the barrier is feeling like it is "one more thing" employees need to do, we can suggest conducting workshops only with those who indicate they want the training.

Identify which influential leaders are likely to be **champions of skillful communication initiatives**. For example, leaders who may be skillful communicators themselves, are Trauma Informed Care proponents, or have been especially vocal about patient and employee experience are often aligned with MI approaches and supporters of widespread training. Once we identify these folks, we can:

- Offer to conduct a short workshop for them. Often this results in influencers advocating for wider MI roll out.
- Interview them about how they successfully elicited buy-in for other initiatives.
- Model the change we want. Often through our own (imperfect) use of empathic communication and other MI skills, we draw in others with similar interest and passion for skillful communication, who then advocate with us for wider spread and adoption of training to support this.

Possible Talking Points for Executive Leaders:

- We are all moving (albeit slowly) toward Value-Based Payment models. This will mean greater emphasis on patient outcomes, which are dependent on patient behavior changes. Having a workforce that is capable and confident in MI is necessary to support this.
- Physician retention is increasingly threatened by high levels of burnout and overwork. There is extensive research demonstrating that physicians and other medical professionals with higher levels of empathic communication skills, have lower burnout and higher job satisfaction.
- Skillful empathic communication is associated with lower litigation and grievance rates.

For Clinical Leaders, like Chief Medical Officers or Nursing Directors:



Motivational Interviewing is an evidenced-based practice in health care and has more than 90 clinical trials demonstrating its effectiveness with a wide range of chronic conditions, health behaviors, mental health and substance use conditions, parenting, smoking and much more. We can provide the MI annotated bibliography under the **MI Facilitator Tab** on www.emorrisonconsulting.com if they'd like to skim the research.



Because the foundation of MI is empathic communication, medical providers and nurses who are proficient in MI have fewer patient complaints.



Research demonstrates that physicians, nurses and other medical staff with better empathic communication skills, have lower burnout, higher job satisfaction and better patient outcomes.



Research on specific MI skills, such as empathic reflection, demonstrate time savings in medical appointments, shaving off an average of 2 minutes per visit.

Clinic Managers & Quality Improvement Leaders:

- Skillful empathic communication, the foundation of all MI training, is associated with lower patient complaints and patient escalations, at all levels of the organization.
- Research indicates skillful communication, such as MI, improves both patient experience and employee experience
- MI is applicable to patient care, supervisor-employee communication, as well as employee-to-employee communication.

We wish you all the best in your efforts and advocacy. Your passion and commitment to empathy-based communications is contagious to those around you!

