



Motivating Change In Young Adults: Understanding the Basics of Motivational Interviewing  
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Questions + Answers

- **Is it possible to over-use affirmations to where it seems disingenuous?**  
Absolutely. It is important to be genuine as this helps you stay in rapport. When using affirmations, you must draw from genuine strengths you see. Your client will give you feedback in their language, facial expression and body language as to whether you are hitting the mark with your affirmations, and if not, then ask an open question about their reaction to your affirmation.
- **What should you do if you face resistance after providing information about a specific topic or subject?**  
Instead of thinking of it as “resistance,” consider that your client is communicating something important about the topic you want to discuss. Try to summarize what has been said, or reflect the reaction you are seeing in your client or ask about their feelings around it. Consider moving to another topic and seek permission to revisit at a later time when it is mutually agreeable.

- **How can we best utilize this when mental illness is a factor?**

At times a client's mental health symptoms (or the acute effects of substance use) may seem to interfere with your ability to use MI skills. However, even in such cases, MI skills such as reflective listening and open questions can still promote engagement so long as they are delivered with compassion and accurate empathy. Such cases are often overlooked as an opportunity to promote engagement and to offer support while a client works towards a place of relative stability, from which they can further engage in the process of change.

#### Additional Resources

- [www.motivationalinterviewing.org](http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org)
- [www.changecompanies.net](http://www.changecompanies.net)
- [www.attcnetwork.org](http://www.attcnetwork.org)
- Motivational Interviewing by Miller and Rollick