

# Design and Implementation of a jumpstart course in counseling techniques for first year psychiatry residents with a focus on Motivational Interviewing (MI)

## Background:

Psychotherapy and counseling are a fundamental skill set required for a resident in psychiatry and psychiatrist to communicate effectively with patients and guide patients toward behavioral change. Despite this importance, medical student exposure to psychotherapy is minimal, at best, prior to starting a residency<sup>1</sup>. While medical students have a positive attitude toward the idea of psychotherapy, when later practicing as a physician, they are unlikely to use it or refer patients for it<sup>2</sup>. Psychiatry residencies are required to develop competencies in certain psychotherapy modalities (Brief, CBT, Combined Therapy-Psychopharmacology, Psychodynamic, Supportive), however there is much variability in how supported residents feel and how much emphasis is placed on these skills in individual programs. While resident self-assessed competence in psychotherapy skills is low at the beginning of residency, it appears to increase through the four-year curriculum<sup>3</sup>.

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a counseling technique which fundamentally views the patient with their own capability to change and utilizes specific communication skills to help guide the patient toward change<sup>4</sup>. Originally developed in the substance use disorder arena, MI has been shown to be effective in addressing many health-related issues and has been applied to other areas such as primary care<sup>4,5</sup>. Although some medical schools introduce MI to students, this counseling style requires continued dedication of practice to gain competence<sup>4</sup>. The fundamentals of most psychotherapy modalities are often considered to be competing skill sets, however MI is a great starting point for anyone aspiring to do counseling, because it provides skills that can be transitioned into other modalities and complement other psychotherapies<sup>6</sup>.

Providing some of these basic skills and techniques to new residents will give them a jumpstart to their counseling competence.

Mark T. Shephard, DO, MS

## Method/Design:

A curriculum was developed primarily based on the book Motivational Interviewing for Clinical practice with additions and supplements added from SAMHSA - Motivational Interviewing Assessment: Supervisory Tools for Enhancing Proficiency, and Intentional Interviewing and Counseling text. Guided and taught by writer; topics included an overview of MI, and thorough exploration of the four key pieces of the process of MI: engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning - basic skills required to adequately perform these processes were explored. A pre/post self-assessment survey was adapted from the self-assessment tool in SAMHSA supervisory tools and completed by participants.

## Conclusion:

- Improvement: MI Style, Change talk, Discrepancies, Ambivalence, Change plan, Client-centered problem discussion
- No change: Unsolicited advice, Close-Ended Questions
- Decline: Open-ended Questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Confrontation, Loss of Control, Authority

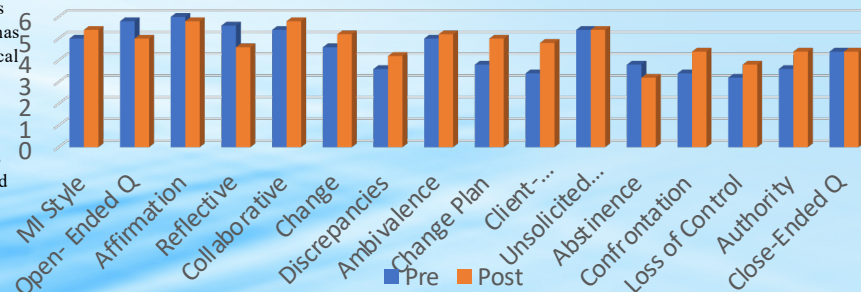
## Limitations:

- Small sample size
- Time-limited implementation
- Not all interns attend all sessions due to schedules
- Pre/Post Survey are self-report
- Case discussions were unobserved interactions
- Interns > 6 months into residency

## Future Directions:

- 4 week – 1 hour course followed by longitudinal follow-up
- Observed mock sessions with real time feed back
- Assessment tool for patient ratings
- Curriculum specific to effective psychotherapist skills

Pre-Post MI Training Items Rated by Participant



## References:

1. References on Request