



Motivational Interviewing (MI) in Schools

What is Motivational Interviewing (MI)?

Motivational Interviewing is a conversational technique meant to increase a person's internal motivation for positive behavior changes. This evidence-based approach, rooted in effective listening and accurate empathy, has shown to be effective in a variety of settings, including educational settings.

Why might we want faculty and staff to learn MI?

- MI is associated with an **increased academic motivation**. One or two sessions of MI can **increase intrinsic motivation**.^{1,2}
- Using MI in conjunction with other rehabilitation programs increases participation.³
- MI may also help your school setting by:
 - Enhancing academic performance,
 - Supporting student wellness programs
 - Acting as an alternative to in-school suspension
 - Working with substance use and childhood obesity.⁴
- MI is an efficient and powerful method for supplementing instruction in middle-school students. One MI session lasting 45 minutes can improve grades by more than four points on a 100-point scale.²
- After two sessions of MI, Terry et al.² found:
 - Students demonstrated significantly higher grades in math, science, and history, in comparison to students who only received one MI session
 - Students experienced significant affective engagement.
 - Students' grades increased by half of a letter grade in 3 out of 4 classes. This moved students' GPA to a B+ compared to a B. (Teachers were blind to the intervention.)

References

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3. Stein, L.A., Colby, S.M., Barnett, N.P., Monti, P.M., Golembeske, C., Lebeau-Craven, R., & Miranda, R. (2006). Enhancing substance abuse treatment engagement in incarcerated adolescents. *Psychological Services*, 3, 25– 34.
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