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# Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' Use of “Evidenced-Based” Practices Involving Motivational Interviewing

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## Overview

- What is motivational interviewing (MI) and its evidence base?
- How has MI been used in vocational rehabilitation (VR)?
- What evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of motivational interviewing (MI) in VR service delivery?
- What is the role of practice guidelines in the use of MI in VR service delivery?

## Agenda

- Overview of Activity
- Presenters
- Discussion
- Wrap up

## Presenters

- **Tim N. Tansey**, Ph.D., Associate Director, University of Wisconsin-Madison evidence-based VR RRTC.
- **Christine Johnson**, M.A., C.R.C., Program Manager, Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Region 5.
- **JoLynn Blaeser**, M.A., L.S.W., Staff Development Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Minnesota.
- **Kay Lechner**, M.A., NCC, LPC-IT, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

## What is Motivational Interviewing?

- A client-centered, directive, non-confrontational counseling approach to enhance motivation for change by exploring and resolving ambivalence (Miller & Rollnick, 2002).
- MI was initially designed to treat alcohol-related problems (Miller, 1983) and was an alternative to the confrontational and coercive approaches prevalent in the substance abuse field at the time (Miller & Rollnick, 2002).
- MI has since been applied to a wide range of health behavior issues (Miller & Rose, 2009).

## What is the efficacy of MI outside of the VR system?

- Extensive research have been conducted on the impact of MI on positive behavioral change
- MI has been used with individuals with substance abuse, mental health challenges for health promotion and treatment adherence

## What research or evidence supports the use of MI in VR?

- There is a need to expand the use of evidence-based practices within rehabilitation counseling (Chan, Travydas, Blalock, Strauser, & Atkins, 2009)
- MI has been recognized as being one of these practices (Chan, Sung, Muller, Wang, Fujikawa, & Anderson, 2011)
- MI is often compared to the transtheoretical (stages of change) model due to its emphasis on addressing motivation early in the pre-contemplation and contemplation stages of the behavioral change process (Hettema, Steele, & Miller, 2005)

## What research projects are you conducting on the application of MI approaches in VR service delivery?

- Motivational Interviewing on VR Outcomes of Subpopulations with the Lowest Employment Outcomes: A Randomized Controlled Study
  - Curriculum-based intervention to improve readiness to engage in VR services
  - Other outcome measures include vocational self-efficacy, work alliance, and changes to Core Self-Evaluation (CSE)
    - CSE includes four personality dimensions: self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and neuroticism



## How did the TACE Center become involved in applying Motivational Interviewing to vocational rehabilitation?

- Seeing MI as perfect fit with VR setting
- Journal article of Washington VR 's use of MI
- Use of MI in Evidence-Based Supported Employment (EBSE)
- Discussion with VR, MINT trainers, and National TACE Collaborative

## What VR counselor behaviors or practices is MI being used to influence or adapt?

- Engagement with consumers
- Partnership/collaboration during the entire VR process, counseling and guidance techniques
- Foundation of basic vocational rehabilitation

## How have MI approaches been adapted into a training curriculum for vocational rehabilitation counselors?

- VR setting examples are used in skill practice
- Counselors are receiving MI training in new counselor orientation
- sustainability methods include agency MI coaches, coaching circles

## As the director of staff development for a state VR agency, how have you approached training and development on Motivational Interviewing?

- Sustained, long-term commitment to investing in training and integration of MI skills
- Implementation Team
- Highly qualified trainers
- Voluntary participation
- Supervisor training
- Evaluation plan
- Successful implementation requires attention to 1) staff competence, 2) organizational supports, 3) leadership

## How was your agency's decision to invest in training on MI for counselors influenced by evidence or research?

- Evidence-based practice (EBP) in mental health such as Individual Placement and Support Model (IPS)
- Experience with MI as an EBP in corrections
- Consultation with Washington state VR

What is the research or activity, that is planned or underway, to measure the effectiveness of the investment in MI training?

- Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Evidence – Based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation is conducting research with Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - Counselor Survey
  - Analysis of case performance

## What are the examples that shows MI approaches have improved service delivery outcomes?

- Greater understanding of consumer, their situation, barriers, and goals
- Stronger consumer participation in the planning process and developing plans more quickly

## How have you used MI approaches in your work with consumers of VR services?

- In-person meetings
  - Intake / Initial assessment meetings
  - Wait list activations, check-ins
  - Planning and discharge meetings
- Use on phone calls



## How does MI change interactions between VR counselors and consumers?

- Calm interactions
  - Helps consumers feel less defensive, more comfortable, especially during initial interviews
- Consumer-focused interactions
  - Less question-focused; counselors talking less, consumers talking more
- Collaborative interactions

## What are some examples that show MI approaches have improved service delivery outcomes?

- Case closure example
  - Consumer and guardian more confident in decision, making informed choices about case outcome
- Active case example
  - Consumer more engaged, created a more concrete plan for her case and her future

Would practice guidelines (evidence-based written guides for counselors) be helpful in deepening and defining the application of MI to VR service delivery?

- Manualized training in specific interventions are strongly recommended to increase understanding of the techniques and process of MI as well as fidelity to the empirically-validated uses of MI
- A counselor toolkit, another approach of the RRTC-EBP, will provide counselors with knowledge of specific assessments and appropriate MI interventions

## Would practice guidelines (evidence-based written guides for counselors) be helpful in deepening and defining the application of MI to VR service delivery?

- Practice guidelines are needed for modifying the application of MI when working with consumers with specific types of disabilities where standard MI approaches may be prove challenging
- Motivational Interviewing in the Treatment of Psychological Problems (Arkowitz, Westra, Miller, and Rollnick, 2008) identifies challenges in using MI and recommends MI modifications based on clinical presentation
- Best if guidelines were applied to the whole VR agency culture- to permeate and sustain system change

## What are other examples where research has influenced or adapted the practices used by VR counselors?

- True evidenced-based practices are in their infancy in VR services
- Many promising practices that have initial empirical support being adapted for service provision in state VR
  - Work incentive planning
  - Program evaluation of services
  - Increase in state VR-provided training of MI principles
  - Executive summary of the intensive case study at: <http://research2vrpractice.org/>

## What are other examples where research has influenced or adapted the practices used by VR counselors?

- Individual Placement and Support Model for Supported Employment for People with Severe Mental Illness
- Clinical Supervision Training for State VR Supervisors (NIDRR Field Initiated Project)
- SSDI Model Demonstration for Improved Employment Outcomes for VR Customers who are SSDI Beneficiaries (ICI, University of Massachusetts, and Mathematica Policy Research Inc.)
- The service delivery to traumatic brain injury population
- Guidelines & best practices working with transition-age youth

## Wrapping Up

*Thank you for participating!*

We invite you to:

- Provide your input on today's webcast
- Share your thoughts on future webcasts topics
- Participate in the Community of Practice to continue the dialogue
- PLEASE CONTACT US:

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