

# Motivational Interviewing with the Problem Gambler

*Anthony S. Parente, MA, LCPC, NCC, MAC, ICGC II, BAC  
Center for Excellence on Problem Gambling  
University of Maryland Department of Psychiatry*

# Objectives

- ▶ Learn what Motivational Interviewing is and how it works to effect change with gamblers
- ▶ Learn how to apply the skills of MI to gamblers
- ▶ Gain an enriched understanding of the change process and our resistance to change.
- ▶ Learn and how to move clients through the stages of change.



To Begin

Breathe——

Deeply

Slowly

*CALM*

# Our Righting Reflex

- ▶ Mental Health Worker. Home visit .  
Sandy 25 yo pregnant  
Panic Attacks  
2 empty bottles of wine on the sink  
A bunch of Scratch-Offs and Lotto Tickets

What are your first thoughts? Feelings?

What do you want to do?

How strong is your righting reflex in this moment? 0-10

What cues you that you are being triggered?

How could you manage your thoughts so as not to interfere with developing a sound therapeutic relationship?

# Our Righting Reflex

- ▶ *Consider something about yourself that...*  
Someone has suggested you could change

Less sugar....

Be on time...

Increase physical activity...

Get more sleep...

Eat healthy...

or...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ix8FPtD9Xg>

# Persuasion/Pressure Style – Helper's task

3 minutes

Explain WHY the person should make this change

Describe 3 BENEFITS that would result from changing

Tell the person HOW to make the change

Emphasize the RISKS they face if they don't  
change

PERSUADE/PRESSURE the person to do what you suggest

PS: This is NOT MI – No reflective listening or exploring

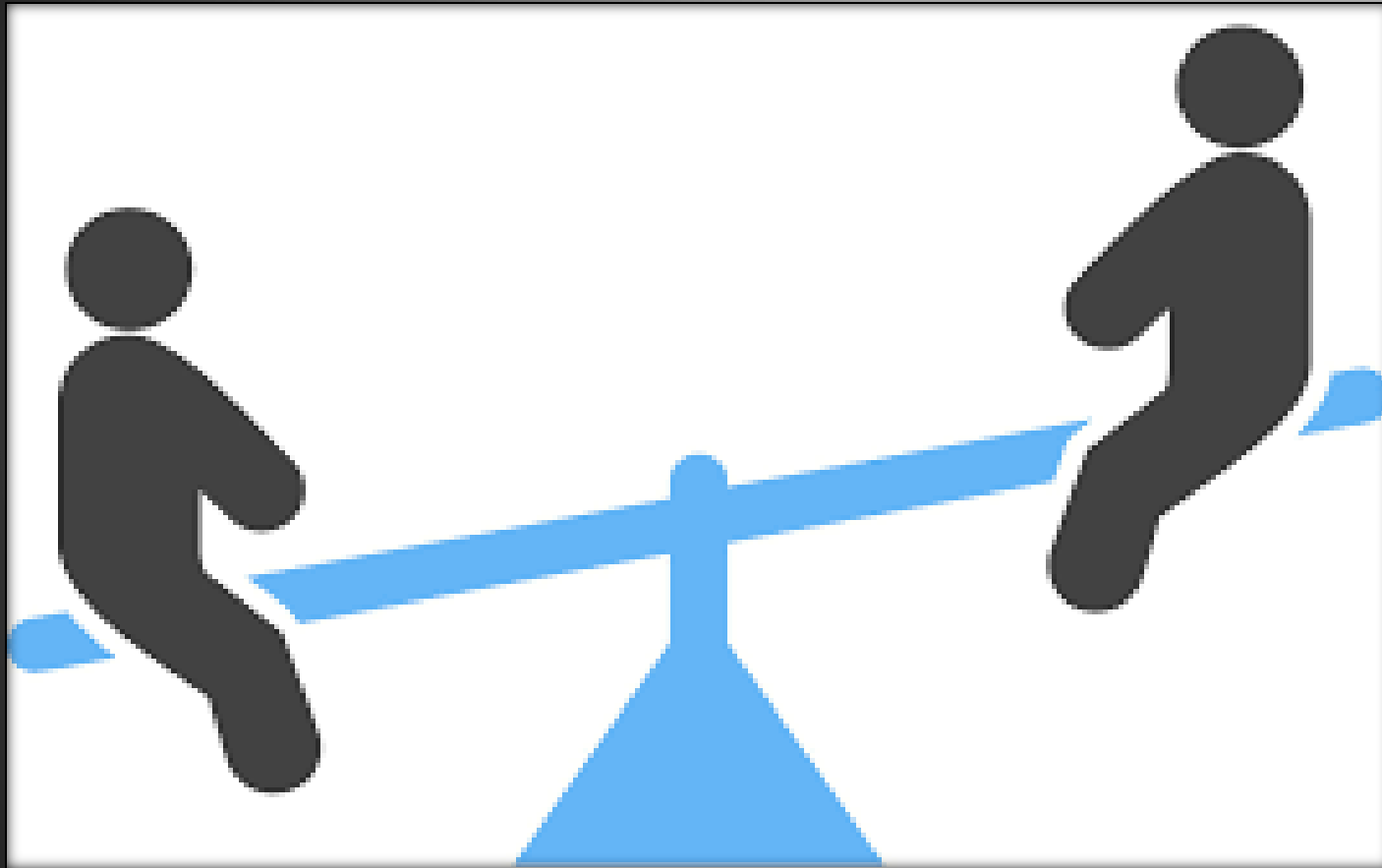
# Under pressure....

▶ People feel, think and behave in the following  
**INVALIDATED** – Disrespected, Misunderstood,  
Ashamed, Unable to change...

**RESISTANT** – Defensive, Argue, Deny, Delay...

**WITHDRAWN** – Disengaged, Passive, Inattentive,  
Avoid...





<https://vimeo.com/18469694>



# Evoking style common responses

- ▶ People feel, think and behave in the following...

**AFFIRMED** – Respected, Understood, Empowered, Hopeful...

**ACCEPTING** – Open, Interested, Cooperative, Less defensive...

**ENGAGED** – Talkative, Activated, Liked, Approachable...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ix8FPtD9Xg>

# Evoking Style – Helper's task

(5 Minutes)

**LISTEN CAREFULLY** to deeply understand the dilemma

**ASK** these open questions (then listen):

1. Tell me a little about the change you are considering
2. What **BENEFITS** would there be if you make the change?
3. **HOW MIGHT** you go about it in order to succeed?

**GIVE** a short summary

**ASK** “ So **WHAT DO YOU THINK** you will do”

**THANK** them for sharing



# Evoking style common responses

- ▶ People feel, think and behave in the following...

**AFFIRMED** – Respected, Understood, Empowered,  
Hopeful...

**ACCEPTING** – Open, Interested, Cooperative,  
Less defensive...

**ENGAGED** – Talkative, Activated, Liked,  
Approachable...

<https://vimeo.com/121078913>

# MILLER'S RESEARCH

- ▶ Providers can significantly influence client motivation
- ▶ Motivation is not seen as a client trait, but the interpersonal process between client and provider
- ▶ How a provider thinks about motivation and change greatly influences what a provider does

# Definitions of Motivational Interviewing

MI is a collaborative conversational style for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change.

*Layperson's Definition*

MI is a person – centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change.

*Practitioner's definition*

*MI is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication with particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.*

Technical Definition

(Miller and Rollnick, 2013)

# How does MI work?

- ▶ Through *conversation* with the client, MI *evokes* a person's desire for change.
- ▶ *It is not trying to get others to do what you think is correct.*
- ▶ *It is not coercive, demanding, or directive.*
- ▶ Use MI when there is a clear and urgent need to change a client's behavior in a particular direction (Helping them to stop gambling, drinking or unhealthy lifestyle choices).
- ▶ Use MI when there is ambivalence about change.

# Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

## “PACE”

- ▶ **Partnership:** MI is not coercive but is implemented for and with the client.
- ▶ **Acceptance:** Respect the client and see them as they are. Accepting the client is not approval.
- ▶ **Compassion:** Actively support the welfare of the client. Give priority to their needs.
- ▶ **Evocation:** The solution already exists in the client. Our job is to evoke or call it forth.

# PACE – Evoking

## ▶ Evoke Ideas

How can we do this?

*Elicit the importance of making a change*

*Instill confidence about making change*

*Develop readiness to change*





# Ambivalence

What is ambivalence all about and how does it fit into the change process?



Ambivalence

# Goal

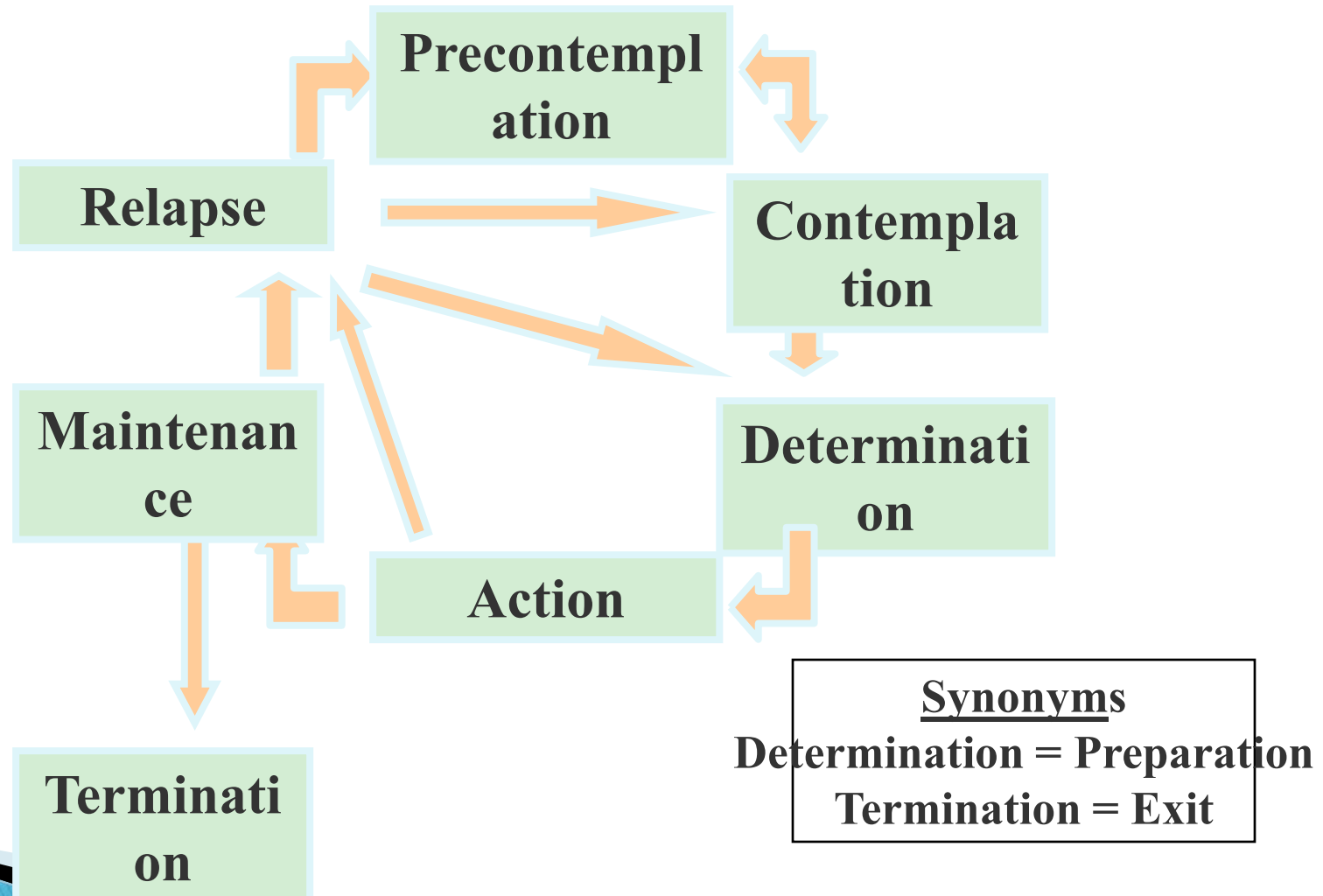
Promote – CHANGE TALK

Dampen – SUSTAIN TALK

# Basic Principals of MI

- ▶ Expressing Empathy
- ▶ Developing Discrepancy
- ▶ *Rolling with Resistance – Sustain Talk*
- ▶ Supporting Self-Efficacy

# Transtheoretical Model



# Ambivalence

## Cognitive

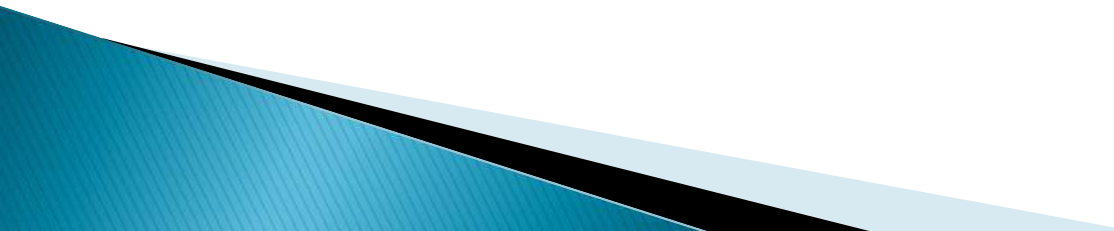
Keep things the same.....Try something new

## Emotional

Fear/anger/shame.....Excitement/confidence

## Behavioral

Halting/hesitating/rushing.....Slow/steady



# Key Communication Skills

## O.A.R.S.

---

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

AFFIRMATIONS

REFLECTIONS

SUMMARY

PROVIDING INFORMATION AND  
ADVICE WITH PERMISSION



# Open ended questions

---

- “Where did you grow up?”
- “How much do you bet in a day?”
- “How does gambling fit into your life?”
- “Do you know that high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart disease?”
- “How has PTSD affected your life?”
- “Tell me a little about your combat experience.”
- “Was your combat experience traumatic?”
- “Question–answer trap.”



# Affirmations

---

- Build self efficacy
- Encourage more progress
- Help clients reveal positive aspects of themselves
- Targeted labeled
- “You’ve demonstrated commitment to your health just by coming in today.”
- “You feel confident that you could do it if it were important to you.”
- “Your commitment to your fellow veterans is commendable.”

# Reflections–Simple

---

- Mirror
- Give back
- Repeat
- Rephrase
- Paraphrase
- Make manifest what you hear the client saying or see the client doing, such as smiling or looking sad

# Motivational Interviewing

- ▶ Summary

## Conversational Style

*Evoking – Change Talk*

*Compassion/Affirmations/Planning*

*Questions?*

# *Questions?*

## *THANK YOU*

# PEACE

Anthony S. Parente, MA, LCPC, NCC, MAC, ICGC II, BAC

[asparente12@gmail.com](mailto:asparente12@gmail.com)

410-321-7753

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT\\_d2yjkUaY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT_d2yjkUaY)