

# Utilizing Motivational Interviewing to Address Resistant Behaviors in Clinical Supervision

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Motivational interviewing is presented as an approach to address resistant behaviors in clinical supervision. A case example is used to illustrate the process in which the relational and technical elements of motivational interviewing can be applied to supervisee resistance. Implications for supervisors and researchers are discussed.

*Keywords:* supervision, motivational interviewing, resistance

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Supervisee resistance has been regarded as a normal, expected by-product of supervision that supervisors are responsible for identifying and addressing (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES], 2011; Bauman, 1972; Borders, 2009). Liddle (1986) described resistant behaviors as protective strategies used by supervisees to cope with a perceived threat brought about during the supervision process. Because supervision is educational and evaluative, supervisors should anticipate that some supervisees will experience unease related to their performance and evaluation (Masters, 1992). Assessing and responding to supervisee resistance is critical because, when left unaddressed, resistant behaviors can have a deleterious effect on the quality and effectiveness of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013).

Varying styles and goals of supervisee resistance have been discussed in the literature. Bernard and Goodyear (2013) listed several examples of supervisee resistance in supervision, including resisting the supervisor's influence and noncompliance with supervision tasks, such as not following through with mutually agreed-upon plans with clients. Resistant behaviors in supervision were described by Kadushin (1968) as games that supervisees play, such as manipulating demand levels, redefining the relationship, reducing power disparity, and controlling the situation. Bauman (1972) also described resistant behaviors as games, noting several examples, including projection, helplessness, and diverting attention onto the supervisor by the supervisee. However, referring to resistance as gamesmanship has been criticized because it can be regarded as derogatory and unfair to the supervisee (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013), especially considering that resistant behaviors can be an appropriate response to the supervision process (Bradley & Gould, 1994).

One of the most frequently cited reasons for resistant behaviors in supervision is supervisee anxiety (Bauman, 1972; Borders, 2009; Bradley & Gould, 1994). Supervisees may engage in resistant behaviors because of evaluation

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anxiety; for example, supervisees may try to manage their supervisor's impressions of them to incur a favorable evaluation. Relatedly, performance anxiety, referring to distress caused when supervisees attempt to meet their own standards for performance, may also result in conflict within the supervisory relationship. Examining unresolved personal problems or conflicts that have emerged through supervision or clinical duties (Liddle, 1986) can result in discord when supervisees use coping strategies, such as avoidance or projection, to manage their discomfort in addressing these issues.

Regardless of the particular source or expression of resistance in supervision, the supervisor is expected to take the lead in addressing it (ACES, 2011). Borders (2009) emphasized the need for supervisors to apply a subtle, nondirective approach when responding to supervisee anxiety and resistance. Other theorists have also advised supervisors against using an authoritarian style in response to resistant behaviors, recommending a less directive approach to increase the supervisee's sense of control and autonomy (Bauman, 1972; Liddle, 1986). Numerous techniques have been proposed within the literature to guide supervisors in using a person-centered style, such as reframing (Masters, 1992), exploring the disadvantages of the supervisee's behavior (Kadushin, 1968), normalizing the supervisee's anxiety (Borders, 2009), modifying the structure of supervision (Liddle, 1986), and providing information to clarify the supervisee's role in supervision (Ellis, 2010).

Although various techniques and skills for responding to resistance have been defined in the literature, to date, no research exists describing *how* supervisors can apply these techniques. In this article, motivational interviewing (MI; Miller & Rollnick, 2013) is presented as a framework to address resistant behaviors caused by supervisee anxiety. Described as a person-centered counseling approach for eliciting behavior change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013), MI has been used with many different problem behaviors (Lundahl & Burke, 2009), including parallel process in supervision (Giordano, Clarke, & Borders, 2013). By elucidating the process in which supervisors can attend to supervisee resistance, the present article addresses a gap in the literature and provides supervisors with a model for using specific skills and techniques discussed in the literature in an intentional manner. First, an overview of MI, including the relational and technical elements of this approach, is presented. Then, a case example is provided to demonstrate the process in which MI is used to respond to supervisee resistance. Finally, implications for supervisors are presented.

### Application of MI in Counseling Supervision

MI is a style of counseling with substantial evidence supporting its efficacy in reducing substance use (Martins & McNeil, 2009) and promoting positive behaviors, such as diet, exercise, and client engagement in treatment (Lundahl, Kunz, Brownell, Tollefson, & Burke, 2010). Preliminary evidence also supports the use of MI as an adjunct treatment for anxiety disorders (Westra, Arkowitz, & Dozois, 2009). Miller and Rose (2009) hypothesized that both relational and technical elements of MI play a role in a client's

behavior change. The relational elements, described by Miller and Rollnick (2013) as *MI spirit*, refer to the style of the counselor. Drawing from Rogers's (1961) core conditions for change, the counselor fosters a therapeutic relationship defined by empathic understanding. Specific techniques are used within this relational context to selectively respond to client language about change. Through this process, clients resolve their ambivalence and strengthen their commitment to change.

## MI Spirit

Partnership, acceptance, compassion, and evocation characterize the spirit in which one practices MI (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Counselors using MI regard the client as a partner, rather than as a passive participant, in the therapeutic process. Relatedly, it is critical that the counselor has an attitude of acceptance, which includes attempting to understand the client's perspective, affirming the client's strengths and inherent worth, and supporting the client's autonomy (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Compassion relates closely to autonomy support, signifying the importance of the counselor promoting the client's welfare. The final element of MI spirit is evocation, which represents the strengths-focused nature of MI in that the counselor is expected to elicit, rather than instill, the desire and commitment to change from the client (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

MI spirit is not an entirely foreign concept in supervision; indeed, numerous theorists have recommended that supervisors apply a style similar to MI spirit with their supervisees. To reduce resistance, Bradley and Gould (1994) stressed the importance of a "positive supervisory relationship grounded by trust, respect, rapport, and empathy" (Counteracting Resistance section, para. 1). Masters (1992) described a collaborative brainstorming process with supervisees to evoke new coping strategies that address problematic behaviors and beliefs that cause resistance. Elements of MI spirit also can be found in the *Best Practices in Clinical Supervision* produced by ACES (2011); best practices consistent with MI spirit include promoting supervisee autonomy, tailoring supervision based on the needs of the supervisee, and establishing a working alliance that is collaborative in nature. Within a therapeutic environment defined by these principles, the counselor uses the technical elements of MI to engage the client in a collaborative and intentional conversation about change.

## Resolving Ambivalence to Change

In MI, particular attention is paid to the language of change. Open-ended questioning, affirming, reflecting, and summarizing are used to elicit and explore client self-talk pertaining to change. This language, referred to as *change talk*, represents statements made by clients about their desire, ability, reasons, need, or commitment to change. Change talk also refers to statements made by clients about the steps (i.e., activating behaviors) that they have taken to change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Efforts are made to evoke

and strengthen change talk in order for clients to talk themselves into changing. Relatedly, when clients make statements supporting the status quo, the counselor guides them through a process of exploring and evaluating this *sustain talk* to help them resolve their ambivalence to change. Attending to change talk in session has been supported in the literature; researchers have found that counselors can influence levels of change talk in session and that the frequency of client change talk is positively associated with improved treatment outcomes (Glynn & Moyers, 2010; Moyers, Martin, Houck, Christopher, & Tonigan, 2009).

In the application of MI to supervision, supervisee resistance caused by anxiety can be understood as ambivalence to change. Supervisees might resist supervision because they are ambivalent about changing a specific behavior or coping strategy recognized by their supervisor. This anxiety to change represents an internal struggle within the supervisee between sustaining the status quo and changing. In other words, supervisees may engage in resistant behaviors because their status quo is threatened by the supervisor. Even though they might understand the benefits of change (i.e., improved clinical skills, client outcomes), they also recognize the benefits of maintaining their current beliefs or behaviors (i.e., these beliefs or behaviors function well in other relational contexts) and the potential disadvantages of change (i.e., having to try a behavioral strategy or skill that feels uncomfortable).

This is not the first time that supervisee resistance has been explained as ambivalence to change. Giordano et al. (2013) described supervisee reluctance to discuss parallel process during supervision as ambivalence. Furthermore, Kadushin (1968) noted that the common factor associated with the various types of supervisee resistance is anxiety to change, brought about by the educational and evaluative nature of supervision. Client resistance in counseling has also been linked to ambivalence to change. For example, clients with anxiety may practice avoidance or other resistant behaviors in counseling because of a reluctance to change existent coping strategies and learn new behaviors that they may perceive as more threatening and less effective in reducing negative affect (Westra, 2012). If supervisee resistance is conceptualized as ambivalence to change, then it is incumbent upon the supervisor to explore the supervisee's internal conflict and elicit change talk through listening, questioning, and reflecting. The process in which the supervisor uses these technical elements of MI is critical.

#### Four Processes of MI

Four processes are enumerated by Miller and Rollnick (2013) to guide counselors in effectively implementing MI. When *engaging*, the counselor focuses on developing trust while also attempting to understand the client's dilemma (i.e., reasons for and against change). As the working relationship is established, the counselor begins *focusing* to define the agenda and select a change goal to address. Once a target behavior has been identified, the counselor transitions to *evoking* the client's arguments for change. As the quantity and depth of change talk increase, the counselor and client enter

into a process of *planning*, to develop a plan to change. These four processes (engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning) are overlapping and iterative, in that they flow from each other in a sequential manner, but it may be necessary to revisit previous processes during the course of MI (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). For example, a counselor may continue eliciting change talk while guiding the client through the planning process to strengthen the client's commitment to change.

The four processes of MI can be used by supervisors to intentionally respond to supervisees' resistant behaviors. When first observed, the supervisor can engage the supervisee to determine the nature and source of the resistant behaviors (Borders & Brown, 2005). For example, is this behavior the result of supervisee ambivalence to change, or is it caused by other supervisory dynamics, such as a mismatch between the supervisor's style and the developmental needs of the supervisee? As the underlying issues are exposed, the focus shifts to identifying a target for change. Once goals are established, the supervisor evokes and strengthens the supervisee's change talk. When the conversation has moved from talking about why change is necessary to discussing how to change, the supervisor transitions to developing an action plan that can be regularly evaluated and modified when necessary. This process may take more or less time depending on the nature of the change being discussed (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). In the next section, a case example is presented that describes how MI can be applied to supervisee resistance in supervision.

### Case Example

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The following case example demonstrates the use of MI in supervision. The supervisee described in this case represents a composite of multiple students I have previously supervised in a clinical mental health master's-level graduate program. An amalgam of past supervisees is presented because composite cases balance privacy concerns with the need to illustrate theoretical material (Duffy, 2010).

The supervisee, a Caucasian man in his late 30s, is a student in counseling practicum. Before enrolling in the counseling program, the supervisee spent over a decade in related human service positions. The supervisee's direct style and problem-solving orientation helped him succeed in his previous career; however, he eventually decided to change professions because he felt that a degree in clinical mental health counseling would make him a more effective helper and would create more opportunities for professional advancement. At times, the supervisee has struggled with adjusting to being a student and has admitted that because of his age and professional experience, he feels like he has more in common with his professors than with other students in the program, most of whom are several years younger than him.

In practicum, the supervisee has struggled with integrating clinical skills learned in previous courses and has relied on skills learned in his previous career. He has disregarded corrective feedback given to him by his supervisor, typically

agreeing to address these concerns but ultimately not following through with the supervisor's recommendations. More specifically, the supervisee has not discussed corrective feedback in his weekly reflection journals or demonstrated that he is addressing identified skills deficits in video recordings of his counseling sessions submitted for supervision.

The supervisee's resistant behaviors represent attempts to reduce anxiety and gain control in supervision. His directive style made him successful in his past career but has become problematic in practicum. Despite receiving feedback that his style interferes with therapeutic relationship building with his clients, he has not addressed this concern because the corrective feedback threatens his sense of adequacy. If the supervisee tries to change his approach to counseling, he faces the possibility of failure, an outcome particularly threatening to him given his considerable experience in a related field. He would also be more vulnerable to unpleasant emotions, such as shame and discouragement. Lack of engagement in supervision, therefore, shields the supervisee from the risks associated with change. The supervisor uses MI to address the supervisee's resistant behaviors and promote engagement in supervision. Brief vignettes, along with commentary, are presented for each of the four processes of MI.

### *Engaging the Supervisee*

The purpose of the initial process, engaging, is to strengthen the supervisory alliance. In doing so, the supervisor also seeks to understand the supervisee's resistant behaviors. Active listening, reflecting, affirming, and open-ended questions are used to establish a supportive environment and assess the ambivalence underlying the supervisee's behavior. This includes exploring the supervisee's personal background, goals, and values to recognize how they reinforce his resistant behaviors. It is also important to identify factors that are incongruous with the supervisee's current response to supervision. Encouraging self-reflection on the discrepancies between existent behaviors and deeply held beliefs is a powerful tool to promote change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). As the supervisee's dilemma becomes clearer, the supervisor guides the direction of the conversation toward focusing on specific behavior change goals.

*Supervisor:* During the past few weeks, we've discussed some of my concerns about your approach with clients. Can you talk about them? (open-ended question)

*Supervisee:* You've said that I am too focused on problem solving with clients. But I feel like I get a lot more accomplished with people when we just cut to the chase.

*Supervisor:* Your style has worked in other settings, so it's difficult to reconcile your past success with my feedback that your approach in practicum can be problematic. (reflection)

*Supervisee:* I know that other students in this program are younger than I am but I have my own style based on experience.

*Supervisor:* I appreciate you being open about that, because it helps me understand why I haven't seen the feedback that we've discussed reflected in your sessions with clients or weekly reflection journals. (affirmation and reflection)

*Supervisee:* Well, I want to improve. But, to be honest, I feel more comfortable being myself.

*Supervisor:* It can feel unpleasant trying a new approach as a counselor, especially when you have spent so much time doing things in a particular way. (reflection)

*Supervisee:* It is difficult. I know you've said that counseling is different than the work that I've done in the past, but there are similarities.

*Supervisor:* Helping others seems to be a common thread. The way that the helping is done differs. During our first supervision session this semester, some of those differences came up when we talked about why you made a career change. (reflection)

*Supervisee:* Yeah. I feel like I made the right decision enrolling in this program. But I guess that I am used to doing things in a certain way.

During this exchange, the supervisor reflected the supervisee's statements to convey understanding and promote continued exploration (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Furthermore, concern about the supervisee's performance was expressed without being argumentative, a strategy consistent with MI spirit (Rosengren, 2009). Rather than dispute the supervisee's reasons to maintain the status quo, such as that his approach had been successful in his previous career, the supervisor reflected both sides of his dilemma. These reflections helped deepen the supervisee's awareness of the problem and exposed potential reasons to change. Change talk that emerged, such as statements representing the supervisee's willingness to participate in supervision, seemed tentative and was followed by sustain talk. The strength and quantity of change talk should be monitored to gauge the supervisee's ambivalence to change.

### *Focusing on a Change Goal*

Through focusing, a direction for the change conversation is identified. The focus of change is shaped by a combination of factors, including the needs of the individual, the expertise of the MI practitioner, and the setting of the conversation (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Given the educational and evaluative nature of supervision, the role of the supervisor, and the supervisee's desire to be successful, the conversation is focused on the supervisee's performance in practicum. When focusing, techniques such as sharing relevant information and providing advice are used to help promote self-reflection and collaborative goal setting (Rollnick, Miller, & Butler, 2007). Skills used during engaging, such as reflecting and affirming, are also necessary to maintain rapport and encourage the supervisee's involvement in the focusing process. As a direction comes into focus, the supervisor and supervisee identify a behavior change goal and negotiate an agenda for future discussions.



*Supervisor:* Can we take a few minutes to make sure that we are on the same page about what needs to be addressed moving forward? (asking permission)

*Supervisee:* Yeah, sure.

*Supervisor:* You mentioned being “too focused on problem solving” with clients. Can you talk some more about that? (open-ended question)

*Supervisee:* You’ve said that I sometimes immediately try fixing client problems, instead of getting to know my clients and understanding their problems better.

*Supervisor:* That’s right. By not spending time building a strong therapeutic relationship, your clients feel less engaged in counseling. Results from the client feedback surveys seem to confirm that disconnect. (providing information)

*Supervisee:* That’s true. But I haven’t really seen that many clients yet.

*Supervisor:* Given how much you want to help your clients, it must be difficult to hear that they do not feel engaged in counseling. (reflection)

*Supervisee:* It’s frustrating. If I try to slow down or use some other techniques, I’m worried that my clients will think that I am incompetent or they are wasting their time. I also don’t want you to think that I don’t know what I’m doing.

*Supervisor:* Do you mind if I share some information that might help? (promoting engagement)

*Supervisee:* OK.

*Supervisor:* I’ve supervised a number of students over the past few years who felt the same way. They were unsure about the process at first, but through practice and supervision, they became more comfortable. This is only your second semester in the program, so I don’t expect you to be a master counselor. (giving advice)

*Supervisee:* That’s good to hear.

*Supervisor:* I expect that you went through a similar learning process when you began your previous career. (reflection)

*Supervisee:* Yeah. But that was over 10 years ago!

*Supervisor:* It’s scary to think about having to go through this all over again. (reflection)

*Supervisee:* Not exactly. But it doesn’t feel comfortable.

*Supervisor:* That’s probably why you have relied on skills from your previous career. Trying out a new approach is kind of risky and makes you uneasy. (reflection)

*Supervisee:* I guess.

As the supervisor assessed the supervisee’s understanding of the corrective feedback, several reasons for the supervisee’s lack of engagement in supervision emerged. The belief that his clients perceived him as incompetent contributed to his desire to draw from his previous career’s experience rather than practice new skills learned as a counselor-in-training. To help evaluate this reason to maintain the status quo, the supervisor



provided client feedback to increase the supervisee's awareness of relational dynamics that might have been unnoticed or disregarded (Worthen & Lambert, 2007). Client feedback was assessed in this case example using the Session Rating Scale (Duncan et al., 2003). The supervisor responded to the supervisee's minimization of this feedback using a reflection to shift the conversation from possible discord to continued exploration of change. Furthermore, the supervisor normalized the supervisee's discomfort associated with learning new behaviors to reduce performance and evaluation anxiety. Before sharing this advice, the supervisor asked permission to affirm the supervisee's autonomy and promote engagement (Rosengren, 2009).

### *Evoking Supervisee Change Talk*

During the evoking process, statements made by the supervisee that represent interest, ability, confidence, and plans to change are elicited and strengthened. In other words, evoking is an intentional way of examining the anticipated positive and negative consequences of change, a strategy to address supervisee resistance recommended by Liddle (1986), to increase motivation to change. Reflections as well as reframing can be used to guide the supervisee away from statements related to the negative consequences of change. Instead of ignoring sustain talk, the supervisor can reframe these statements within the context of the supervisee's expressed goals and motivation to change. This process promotes movement toward change by assisting the supervisee in resolving ambivalence. The supervisor also uses affirmations to instill a sense of hope that the supervisee will be able to take the steps necessary to change.

*Supervisor:* For next week, I'd like you to focus on rapport building with your clients. You can do this by slowing down your pace and using process skills, such as immediacy and reflections. How does that sound? (providing information)

*Supervisee:* I can do that.

*Supervisor:* I also want you to write about what you did differently with clients and what it was like trying these skills in your journal. What are some reasons why reflection is an important part of counselor training? (providing information, open-ended question)

*Supervisee:* I am so focused on doing that I forget to stop and think about how I'm doing.

*Supervisor:* Reflecting on your experience gives you a chance to evaluate your progress and sort out some of the internal reactions that seem to be triggered in session with clients. What else? (reflection, open-ended question)

*Supervisee:* It can help keep me on track. We've talked about these topics before, but I wasn't really thinking about what I needed to work on when I was with clients.

*Supervisor:* Tell me some more about that. (open-ended question)

*Supervisee:* Having to write about my experience will help hold me accountable. I have three sessions scheduled before our next supervision, so I'll take notes about my experience with each client so that I can write my journal.

*Supervisor:* That's a great idea! What else? (affirmation, open-ended question)

*Supervisee:* I really want to do well in this program. I gave up a lot to change careers.

*Supervisor:* Learning the skills we've discussed will help you succeed in practicum and beyond. What else? What might it mean for the connection you have with your clients? (reflection, open-ended question)

*Supervisee:* It wouldn't hurt to spend some time getting to know my clients better.

A key quality of conversations during the evoking process is that the change talk originates from the person making the change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). In this exchange, the supervisor used questions and reflections to elicit arguments for change from the supervisee. The supervisor also encouraged elaboration to help strengthen the quantity and depth of the change talk. The supervisee stated that he was able to change and offered several arguments supporting the need to break from the status quo. Furthermore, the supervisee explained how he can begin taking steps toward his goal, which also indicates momentum in the direction of change. Although he expressed interest in change, it is likely that, at this point, this motivation has more to do with the demands of supervision than having an intrinsic desire to improve. As a result, continuing to evoke and strengthen the supervisee's change talk to identify more meaningful incentives to change is essential. It is possible that when the supervisee comes into direct contact with the advantages of change, his motivation to engage in supervision will increase.

### *Planning for Change*

The purpose of planning is to move the supervisee from talking about change to talking about *how* to change. A natural transition from evoking to planning can be made when change talk reflects commitment and planned action (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Reflections, questions, and providing information are used to guide the supervisee in developing a concrete action plan for change. The planning process mirrors guidelines for remediating problems of professional competence recommended by Rust, Raskin, and Hill (2013); concrete strategies as well as a timeline for addressing required changes expected of the supervisee are established. Throughout this process, the supervisor continues to engage, focus, and evoke change talk to increase momentum to change and reduce apprehension the supervisee may have about the potential unpleasant aspects of changing the status quo.

*Supervisor:* Let's talk about some steps we can take together to help you move forward. (providing information)

*Supervisee:* Thanks, I know what I need to do.

- Supervisor:* OK. What are some changes that you can make to help you follow through with what we've discussed so far? (open-ended question)
- Supervisee:* Spending a few minutes ahead of each session thinking about my role and what my goals are will help me stay more focused during my sessions.
- Supervisor:* What else? (open-ended question)
- Supervisee:* Since part of the reason why I feel uneasy in session is because I get nervous about being recorded, I can place the camera somewhere out of my line of sight.
- Supervisor:* Great idea! I'm also wondering what it will be like for you to share the reactions you have with clients in your weekly journals and future supervision sessions? (affirmation, open-ended question)
- Supervisee:* Honestly, I've never had supervision like this before, so I'm still figuring out what's expected of me. I'm not used to talking about these things with someone who is evaluating me. But if you think that it will be helpful, I'm fine with it.
- Supervisor:* Talking about the "uncomfortable" experiences is an important part of supervision. So I look forward to having those conversations. Any other ways I can help? (providing information, affirmation, open-ended question)
- Supervisee:* Do you want me to use a certain number of reflections? Do I have to use silence?
- Supervisor:* I think that it might be useful for us to review the different evaluation criteria for practicum to clarify what progress you are expected to show at this point in the program. This will also help us identify specific behaviors to address this coming week. How does that sound? (providing information)

During this exchange, the supervisee offered several change strategies to increase his engagement in supervision and address corrective feedback given to him by the supervisor. The supervisor also shared practicum evaluation requirements in a compassionate and collaborative manner. Vaguely defined strategies can impede change plan implementation; therefore, it was necessary to provide specific instruction on what was expected of the supervisee between supervision sessions. Clarification of student responsibilities for training is also a key strategy to prevent and remediate professional competency issues (Rust et al., 2013) and enhance the supervisory working alliance (Ellis, 2010). Finally, the supervisor affirmed the supervisee to convey acceptance and encourage future collaboration.

### Implications for Supervisors and Researchers

Several implications for supervisors and researchers can be gleaned from the case example. A key implication of using MI is that resistance is conceptualized as a normal quality of change rather than as gamesmanship. Indeed, treating the supervisee's behaviors as manipulative or disingenuous is counter to the relational elements of MI. Viewing resistance as ambivalence

enables the supervisor to collaboratively explore the supervisee's motivation to change. During this process, it is critical that the supervisor assess not only the supervisee but also the particular context of the conversation. In the case example, the supervisor took a directive role in goal setting with the practicum student. This strategy matched the developmental needs of the student; in general, novice supervisees require increased structure in supervision (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2011). It may also be necessary to take a more directive role in developing an action plan when client safety is at issue. Balancing the needs of the supervisee with the parameters of supervision is essential to using MI effectively.

Additional research is needed to assess the utility and effectiveness of MI in supervision. Although MI has demonstrated efficacy as a counseling intervention, supervision includes power dynamics that may conflict with the spirit and practice of MI. Assessing supervisory interactions using available MI fidelity measures, such as the Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity 4.0 coding system (Moyers, Manuel, & Ernst, 2014), may clarify how the evaluative and educational components of supervision influence MI delivery. Conducting a qualitative investigation of how MI-trained supervisors have learned and used this approach with supervisees may also help to identify the potential facilitators and barriers in adopting this approach in supervision. Moreover, examining supervisors' experiences can provide insight into the complexities of integrating MI within the various models and settings of supervision.

Supervisee factors, including motivation and change talk, can be assessed to evaluate the effectiveness of MI in addressing resistant behaviors. The Change Questionnaire, a self-report instrument developed by Miller and Johnson (2008), can be adapted as a measure of counselor motivation to change during supervision. Relatedly, supervisees' use of change and sustain talk can be monitored using the CLEAR (Client Language EAsy Rating) coding system (Glynn & Moyers, 2012) to determine how MI influences change discussion during supervision. Frequency and type of change talk can also be examined as a potential mediator of a supervisee's behavior change. Interviews to assess the mechanisms in which MI influences behavior and how it is perceived (Marcus, Westra, Angus, & Kertes, 2011) by supervisees can be conducted to establish guidelines for supervisors describing how this approach can be implemented.

### Limitations

The ideas presented in this article should be viewed within the context of several limitations. A case example was presented based on my supervision experience, thereby limiting the generalizability of the guidelines and implications offered. Furthermore, although MI has shown promise with diverse populations (Miller & Rollnick, 2013), research is needed to determine how this approach can be used with supervisees of different backgrounds. An additional limitation is that the case depicted a single example of resistant behavior. Several determinants of resistant behaviors in supervision have been

discussed in the literature, including attachment style (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013), personal issues with the supervisor (Liddle, 1986), and supervisory style (Borders & Brown, 2005). Borders and Brown (2005) speculated that a dogmatic or inflexible supervisory style can contribute to resistant behaviors by threatening the supervisee's sense of control. Further research is necessary to determine whether MI is an appropriate intervention for these types of supervisee resistance. Finally, the case example presented an ambivalent, but not overtly resistant, supervisee. Although MI is an efficacious approach to address discord, greater attention in future research is necessary to address these challenging scenarios.

## Conclusion

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An evidence-based approach to behavior change is presented as an intervention for addressing resistant behaviors in supervision. The relational and technical elements as well as the processes of MI were described and illustrated in a case example to demonstrate how supervisors can intentionally intervene with their supervisees when issues arise. By successfully addressing supervisees' resistant behaviors, supervisors can improve the quality of the supervision they provide, which undoubtedly can contribute positively to supervisees' development and client outcomes.

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