

An Example of an MI “Session”

1. Set the Agenda – Find the Target Behavior (e.g. smoking, exercising)

Clarify the agenda around a target behavior about which there is ambivalence. Try a series of special questions to help sort things out.

2. Ask about the positive (good things) aspects of the target behavior. This is often an engaging surprise. However, it will only work if you are genuinely interested.

- What are some of the good things about _____?
- People usually _____ because there is something that has benefited them in some way. How has _____ benefited you?
- What do you like about the effects of _____?

➤ Summarize the positives

3. Ask about the negative (less good things) aspects of the target behavior:

- Can you tell me about the down side?
- What are some aspects you are not so happy about?
- What are some of the things you would not miss?

➤ Summarize the negatives

4. Explore life goals and values.

These goals will be the pivotal point against which cost and benefits are weighed.

- What sorts of things are important to you?
- What sort of person would you like to be?
- If things worked out in the best possible way for you, what would you be doing a year from now?

➤ Use affirmations to support “positive” goals and values.

5. Ask for a decision.

Restate their dilemma or ambivalence then ask for a decision.

- You were saying that you were trying to decide whether to continue or cut down...
- After this discussion, are you more clear about what you would like to do?
- So have you made a decision?

6. Goal setting – Use SMART goals

(Specific, Meaningful, Assessable, Realistic, Timed)

- What will be your next step?
- What will you do in the next one or two days?
- Have you ever done any of these things before to achieve this?
- Who will be helping and supporting you?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 what are the chances that you will do your next step?
(anything under 7 and their goal may need to be more achievable)

➤ If no decision or decision is to continue the behavior.

- If no decision, empathize with difficulty of ambivalence.
- Ask if there is something else which would help them make a decision?
- Ask if they have a plan to manage not making a decision?
- Ask if they are interested in reducing some of the problems while they are making decision?
- If decision is to continue the behavior, go back to explore the ambivalence.