

Motivational Interviewing in vocational counselling interventions: A case study

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Introduction

Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2002) is an effective method developed in the addiction field to facilitate change and treatment compliancy among less motivated clients. As transition from school to work requires a large amount of motivation, it is possible that this method can successfully enhance the traditional vocational services to help young people in their decision making process.

Case study

Michael is a 17-years old boy that dropped out from high school due to lack of motivation and needed to find an apprenticeship. He started a twice weekly traditional state coaching program with a school counsellor (box 1). In the first 3 sessions, he showed no motivation to make a career choice or to look for an apprenticeship, as shown by his lack of attendance in his homework. An additional motivational interviewing session was then conducted with him at the 4th session (see box 2 & 3).

Box 1

Initial session's programm including the MI session

- 1st : Anamnestic interview
- 2nd : Assessment of interests, skills & personality
- 3rd : Individual feedback
- **4th : Motivational interviewing**
- 5th to 9th : Coaching & training for writing resume and letters

Box 2

Topic covered through the MI session

- Emotions related to the transition to work
- Advantages of change & disadvantages of the status quo
- Ambitions & personal values
- The vicious lethargy circle
- Means to achieve goals

Box 3

Techniques used through the MI session

- Active listening
- Developing discrepancy between current situation & core values
- Exploring both sides of ambivalence
- Eliciting & strengthening the client's own motivation for change
- Informing, advising & planning

The MI session allowed Michael's to express :

- his anxiety about starting to work
- disadvantages of his actual situation (being caught in a vicious lethargy circle & feeling useless)
- advantages of starting an apprenticeship (related to his desire for self-determination and financial autonomy)



By reinforcing Michael's own arguments for change, the counselor assisted him strengthening his motivation to:

- choose an occupation
- look for an apprenticeship
- develop a short and long term change plan

Results

At the meeting following the MI session (5th session) Michael had found two professional internships and bought an appointment diary. Effects of the MI session were also attested by a beneficial clothing change and a more positive mood. During the following coaching and training sessions (5th to 9th) Michael's motivation was further strengthened and his career choice had been refined. He was well received during his internship and had quickly apprenticeship offers.

Discussion & Perspectives

Results of this case study shows that the MI session seems to have catalysed the commitment of Michael in the exploration stage, that precede the crystallisation in the career decision-making process. This case study suggests that Motivational Interviewing may be a good complement to vocational counselling interventions. However, more clinical researches based on larger groups of clients are required to determine the efficacy of such an intervention in this context.