

## Motivational Interviewing Step By Step

Four DVDs

Available at [www.psychotherapy.net](http://www.psychotherapy.net)

US \$199.00 (individual license)

US \$599.00 (group license + instructor's manual)

Review by Julie A. Schumacher, PhD<sup>1</sup>

As a clinical psychologist and associate professor, who has been actively involved in MI training and research for the past 8 years, I was interested to review the four-part DVD series, *Motivational Interviewing Step By Step*. Cathy Cole, LCSW, shines as the star of this series. Her expertise as both a practitioner and trainer of MI are evident throughout each DVD. The information provided in the series incorporates several updates to MI terminology and concepts introduced over the past decade. Thus the series is valuable both to the MI novice and the experienced MI practitioner/trainer interested in a “refresher course.” Cole’s warm and casual presentation style is complemented by series moderator Victor Yalom, Ph.D. Yalom engages Cole in discussions about core concepts of MI, as well as the MI sessions depicted on each DVD. While seemingly unscripted and casual, these lively discussions provide the viewer with a clear, logical, and linear explanation of MI concepts. Yalom’s curiosity about MI and how it differs from other approaches guide him to ask Cole probing questions that deepen the discussion of MI and further clarify concepts for viewers.

The DVDs are titled “Core Concepts,” “Increasing Importance,” “Resolving Ambivalence,” and “Increasing Confidence.” The “Core Concepts” DVD is largely didactic, and contains small segments of MI sessions conducted by Dr. Bill Miller to illustrate or reinforce specific MI concepts as they are discussed, as well a series of interactive practice exercises based on MI session segments conducted by Cole or Miller. The remaining three DVDs each contain a brief didactic introduction followed by 3 full-length MI sessions conducted by Cole to illustrate MI concepts. Each MI session includes an introductory discussion by Yalom and Cole, periodic pauses in which Cole provides a brief commentary that allows the viewer to better understand which MI concepts or techniques are being illustrated at various points during the session, and a debriefing discussion by Yalom and Cole.

As implied by the title, in the “Core Concepts” DVD, key elements of MI are reviewed, including: definition, spirit, applications, change talk, phases, and core techniques. During the practice exercises at the end of this DVD, Cole provides viewers with a valuable opportunity to generate MI responses in real time as they observe an MI session. For each exercise, Cole first reviews the core concept viewers will draw on to generate their response, then presents a brief segment of an MI session, and finally instructs viewers to pause the DVD and generate a particular type of response. The exercises seem like a great, non-threatening way for MI novices to build skill, because the only task for the viewer is to generate a particular response, without the added burden of having to first determine what type of response might be best at that point in the

session. I used these exercises in a recent MI training for medical students, and the response from the students was overwhelmingly positive. Although the training group was very new to MI and had only participated in about 5 hours of training at the time I introduced these practice exercises, they felt confident shouting out responses each time the video was paused. In addition, these exercises appeared to deepen their understanding of MI concepts and techniques.

The DVD entitled “Increasing Importance” opens with a discussion of the progression from sustain talk to change talk during an MI session. This DVD includes three very different MI sessions in which the client is uncertain about the need for change: a mandated college student drinker, a mother who is defensive about her pediatrician’s assertion that her daughter is overweight, and a high school senior who is considering dropping out. These sessions provide opportunities for Cole to demonstrate how providers in various roles (i.e., college counselor, health educator, and high school counselor) can use various techniques for increasing importance, such as feedback and envisioning. These sessions, particularly the second session, in which Cole acts as a health educator, also demonstrate the importance of resisting the righting reflex with clients who are uncertain about the need for change.

The DVD entitled “Exploring Ambivalence” includes three MI sessions in which Cole acts as a counselor in an employee assistance program and a health educator. At the outset of this video, Cole and Yalom engage in a discussion about ambivalence and the sources of ambivalence. This DVD provides a valuable opportunity for Cole to discuss and demonstrate the importance of adopting an equipoise stance when working with clients who are considering changes that are neither objectively “good” nor objectively “bad.” This stance is demonstrated in sessions in which an EAP provider is assisting a client in deciding whether to take a promotion or keep his current job and a health educator is assisting a mother in deciding whether to continue to breastfeed her one year old child. This equipoise stance is contrasted to an approach in which a health educator strategically reinforces and focuses on change talk during a discussion of smoking cessation. I also showed the smoking cessation session during the recent training I offered for medical students, and the students’ responses were uniformly positive. Although they were most struck by how good Cathy Cole is at MI, and how powerfully beneficial MI can be for patients approaching difficult behavior changes, they also discussed the ways in which the commentary before, during, and after the session helped increase their understanding of MI.

The final DVD, entitled “Increasing Confidence,” opens with a discussion about how and why confidence is essential for behavior change as well as strategies for increasing confidence. In the three MI sessions included on this DVD, Cole acts twice as a health educator and once as a counselor. Clients in these sessions are a single mother who



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The author reports no conflicts of interest.

is uncertain about how to incorporate more exercise into her busy life, a teenager who would like to change her diet, and a man who would like to make more progress toward financial security. In these sessions Cole demonstrates how developing a plan, eliciting past successes, and affirming strengths, among other strategies, can be used to enhance client confidence about change. During the second session, the teenager with whom Cole is working is very loquacious. Thus, this session provides Cole with the opportunity to demonstrate not only how to change-plan and increase confidence, but also how guide a session back to the agreed upon focus in a manner consistent with the spirit of MI.

In sum, this DVD series provides a review of the core concepts of MI including updates over the past decade, a set of interactive practice exercises, and nine full-length MI sessions depicting how providers from various professional backgrounds working in diverse settings might use MI to help clients make a variety of important life changes. The discussion and commentary that accompany each MI session allow viewers an invaluable window into Cole's thinking as she conducts an MI session. Thus, these sessions allow viewers to observe how MI sessions unfold from engagement, to focus, to evocation, to planning, and to understand the provider metacognitive processes that underlie this unfolding. Although the "Core Concepts" DVD is a valuable stand-alone training resource that would be a worthwhile addition to any MI library, the subsequent DVDs in the series add great richness to the understanding of MI. Each of the subsequent DVDs can also be used as a stand-alone training resource, as each begins with a brief review of core MI concepts. However, these DVDs are likely to be most valuable if viewed after the "Core Concepts" DVD.

As noted previously, this series would likely be a valuable learning tool for both novice and experienced motivational interviewers. For the latter, this series would be valuable as a refresher course. For the former, this series would be a valuable adjunct to formal training and coaching. The series could easily be incorporated into formal training (using the instructor's manuals that accompany the Institutional / Instructor's Version as a source of valuable tips for how to use the DVDs as part of a formal training) or could be viewed before or after formal training to reinforce concepts and enhance learning. Many learners at all levels will likely appreciate the availability of CE credits from psychotherapy.net for this video series.

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