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MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

HELPING ADVISORS INITIATE CHANGE IN STUDENT BEHAVIORS

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Academic advisors work with students in the decision-making process regarding majors, courses, and careers as well as personal issues about behaviors that influence students' ability to achieve success in college. Decisions related to study habits, health behaviors (including alcohol and drug use), and relationships affect the likelihood of success or failure in the students' academic career. Motivational interviewing (MI) is an appropriate approach for addressing these decisions and other student issues. The advisor can utilize MI to assist students in developing motivation to make a choice or to change a behavior. Required for student development, change may result naturally as a consequence of growth and time, influenced by brief interventions with a professional or other person or facilitated by the faith and hope of the individual (Miller & Rollnick, 2002).

MI is a collaborative, person-centered partnership of guidance to elicit and strengthen motivation for change based on the four general principles of a) expressing empathy, b) developing discrepancy, c) rolling with resistance, and d) supporting self-efficacy (Martino & Hopfer, 2009). Motivation is fundamental to change and requires readiness, willingness, and belief in the ability to change. Intrinsic motivation for change arises in an accepting, empathetic, and empowering interaction that provides a safe zone for the individual to take risks and explore values and needs (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). This safe zone for a student often forms in the presence of an academic advisor through discussions of a possible change and an analysis of the student's level of motivation to adjust. Therefore, advisors need not ask, "Why isn't this student motivated more?" but instead question, "For what is the student motivated?" Advisors need to help students determine their willingness and confidence levels to improve their academic experience. Using MI, advisors assist students in identifying issues affecting their academic progress or personal growth and provide support to overcome ambivalence about change.

Based on collaboration, evocation, and autonomy (Miller & Rollnick, 2010a), MI allows the advisor and student to work in partnership as the student articulates aspirations and reaches goals. As an autonomous agent, the student has the right and

capacity for self-direction and the ability to make an informed choice. We present MI as an appropriate approach for academic advisors to use to help students with a variety issues, including choosing or changing a major, a career, or academic or personal behavior. We recommend that academic advisors implement MI strategies with students needing to make behavioral changes for the purpose of personal or academic success. The MI approach shares common principles and can be implemented collaboratively with other approaches including appreciative advising (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008).

The origins of MI lie in Carl Rogers's person-centered psychotherapy (Markland, Ryan, Tobin, & Rollnick, 2005) with constructs of Rogers's humanistic theory consistent with the MI characteristics of empathy, warmth, genuineness, and immediacy. Student centered and intrinsically oriented, Rogers's theory requires "necessary and sufficient interpersonal conditions for fostering change" (Miller & Rose, 2009, p. 2). MI places the responsibility for motivating students to change with the advisor and the impetus to make and sustain the change with the advisee. MI is built on the Rogerian humanistic principles of unconditional positive regard, respect for the advisee, and support of self-esteem as the advisee examines the need for change and the motivation to engage in the change process.

Four Processes in the Use of the Motivational Interview

Miller and Rollnick (2010b) identified four MI processes: engaging, guiding, evoking, and planning. Engaging, the relational foundation, involves listening to the student's dilemma to determine if MI is the appropriate approach. Guiding involves the directional focus of MI including identifying a change goal, setting the agenda, and if necessary, giving information and advice—but only with student permission and in a way that honors the student's autonomy. When providing suggestions, advisors should try to offer several options to the student. Evoking, the crux to MI, requires the advisor to recognize and elicit change talk, a critical component to which advisors must be attuned, from the student (Miller & Rollnick, 2010b). Planning involves negotiating change goals and plans, strengthening commitment, and implementing and adjusting behavior change. The specific change plan is negotiated when the student is ready and involves setting goals, considering change options, arriving at a plan, and eliciting commitment.

Motivational Interview Outcomes

Other than validating the research base and effectiveness of MI, the outcomes of research often seem abstract to practitioners. However, they provide data related to implementation. Amrhein, Miller, Yahne, Palmer, and Fulcher (2003) provided skill-based techniques that advisors can use when implementing MI with advisees. Their data indicate the need to measure the strength (not frequency) of the advisee's change talk. They discussed the need to evaluate the pattern of the language including the

degree of commitment the student expresses throughout the session and the words used to close the session. An increase in commitment language articulating the need, want, ability, and dedication to change positively predicts sustained change.

Moyers, Miller, and Hendrickson (2005) found that, when implemented in a student-centered setting and by a facilitator using well-developed interpersonal relations skills, MI correlates with behavior change. Important interpersonal relations skills used in MI include advanced reflection, strength finding, identification of discrepancies, appropriate confrontation, and motivation for the change process. The advisor's ability to engage the advisee empathically in a supportive environment and the advisee's verbalization intentions for positive change, in the context of an action plan for implementing change, significantly increase the probability for behavior change (Gollwitzer, 1999).

General Principles of the Motivational Interview

Four general principles underlie MI: expressing empathy, developing discrepancy, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy (Martino & Hopfer, 2009). The advisor employs empathetic listening, characterized by an attitude of acceptance, throughout the MI process (Martino & Hopfer, 2009). The critical components of empathetic listening, as well as acceptance of the individual, relate to rolling with resistance. Empathetic advisors see the student's behaviors and perspectives as understandable, comprehensible, and valid; they do not consider the student's ambivalence to change as abnormal.

Mottarella, Fritzsche, and Cerabino (2004) stated, "An advisor needs to give specific care to establish a relationship with the advisee and convey warmth and support in the relationship" (p. 57). Mahoney (2009) suggested that rapport skills of appreciating the individual, presence, and compassion are integral to developing a strong, facilitative relationship with the student.

The acceptance of the student's unique experiences will nurture the relationship; however, the advisor uses MI to encourage a change of behavior by helping the student resolve ambivalence about change. By showing discrepancies between the student's current state and his or her desired state, the advisor helps an advisee see the importance of change; however, the advisor needs to allow the student to voice concerns and must give reasons for change, not pressure or coerce it. Through open-ended questions, the advisor helps a student clarify goals and values that conflict with current behavior. In addition, the advisor can present possible consequences of continuing the behavior.

Rolling with resistance refers to the way an advisor responds to students reluctant to change. First, the advisor should not argue with the advisee regarding the change, because by defending the status quo, the student can be further entrenched into a behavior that even the student wants to change. The advisor can provide information and offer different perspectives on a situation, but the final decision on goals and change is under the ownership of the student.

A student may desire and believe in the importance of a change but lack confidence in the ability to make the transition. Bandura (1994) described self-efficacy as an individual's belief about her or his capability to perform in ways that influence life events; it is a key component of motivation to change. The advisor can support self-efficacy through open questions related to belief in ability to change and past successful experiences; for example, "What helped you earn a 3.0 GPA last semester?"

Motivational Interview Strategies

Miller and Rollnick (2010b) provided several strategies to build momentum to change. The student needs to establish the importance of change and determine his or her level of confidence to create desired change as measured by a confidence ruler scaled from 0 to 10. To use the confidence ruler, an advisor might ask a student on academic probation the following question: "On a scale of 0 to 10, with *0* being not important at all and *10* being extremely important, how important is it for you to get off of academic probation?" The following question relates to the confidence in the student's ability to work toward academic success: "On the scale of 0 to 10, with *0* being not confident to *10* being extremely confident, how certain are you that, if you decided to get off of academic probation, you could do it?"

Asking Open Questions, Affirming, Reflecting, and Summarizing

The importance and confidence rulers allow the advisor to establish where the student currently stands regarding the behavior or issue being discussed. The advisor can then utilize different strategies, such as those offered by Miller and Rollnick (2010b), to implement MI for the desired change. For example, a technique of asking open questions, affirming, reflecting, and summarizing (OARS) supports the student in the resolution of the ambivalence he or she currently holds toward the desired change.

By asking open questions, advisors encourage students to talk and help establish accepting and trusting relationships. By avoiding the question-answer trap, in which the advisor asks questions that restrict the student to a *yes* or *no* response, advisors can better understand the issue and also gauge a student's level of determination to change. Miller and Rollnick (2010b) provided the following example of an open question: "Hello. Are there things that you would like to discuss with me today?"

By providing affirmation, advisors offer support to, build rapport with, and encourage self-efficacy in the student. Direct affirmations demonstrate positive regard and can make the student feel valued as well as boost the positive aspects of the relationship: "You seem committed to making things better and it has been enjoyable visiting with you today."

Reflective listening is one of the most important skills required for MI (Miller & Rollnick, 2010a) because, to pursue change talk and goals, the student must be allowed to examine aloud the current situation and determine a reasonable strategy

for change. Failure to listen reflectively may result in negative expressions, such as ordering, warning, giving advice, persuading with logic, and disagreeing (Gordon, 1970), which distract the student from the desired focus.

Summarization, the final component of OARS, allows the advisor to connect ideas presented and reinforce concepts discussed in the session such that the student's change talk yields a clearer understanding of the situation. Summarizing also demonstrates to the student that the advisor has been actively listening and is engaged in the process. The advisor can use summaries to make transitions from one focus area to another, which can serve as a synopsis for the session (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). The collaborative tone of the summary allows the student to add or delete information and can be utilized at the beginning of the next meeting to build on progress.

Evoking Change Talk

Miller and Rollnick (2010b) provided four different categories of change-talk questions including those that elicit recognition of the disadvantages of the status quo and the advantages of change as well as inspire optimism for and intention to change. Explaining disadvantages of the status quo, the advisor may ask the following questions:

- What do you think will happen if you do not decide on a career?
- What worries you about being on academic probation?
- If you do not change, what do you think will eventually happen to you?

To show advantages of change, the advisor might adopt the following courses of inquiry:

- What would be the benefits of choosing a major?
- If you were off academic probation, how would your life be different?
- What would be the positive outcomes of deciding on a career?

To elicit optimism about change, the advisor may prompt the advisee with the following queries:

- What makes you believe this change is possible?
- Tell me about a situation in which you have overcome similar challenges successfully?
- Who is available to provide you support in making this change?

Advisors can gauge the intention to change by asking the following:

- How are you feeling about your academic situation at this time?
- What changes are you willing to try?
- What do you intend to do now?

Through active listening and open questions, the advisor has the opportunity to determine the student's commitment and confidence to change. Preparatory change talk involves the recognition of the issue and focuses on DARN (Miller and Rollnick, 2010b):

- *D*—Desire to change: "How much does this behavior concern you?"
- *A*—Ability to change: "How could you make this change?"
- *R*—Reason to change: "What is a good reason for making this change?"
- *N*—Need to change: "How important is it to you to make this change?"

The student's expression of a desire to change current behaviors points the advisor to the issues the student is experiencing. In some cases, such as when a student faces academic probation, one direction for change is clearly preferable. However, for other concerns, such as career choice, the advisor needs to help the advisee resolve ambivalence and move forward with life. In any case, because change requires action, the advisor needs to inspire the student to move from discussion to action and can use either a directive or nondirective MI approach, depending on the situation.

Implementing change talk involves eliciting a commitment to change, a call to action, articulation of steps in the change process, and elaboration of goals that motivate the student to continue exploration in a single direction. By responding with interest and encouragement, the advisor supports the student's pursuit of a line of thought; she or he can prompt the advisee with directed questions such as, "In what ways will the change affect your situation?" or "What other concerns do you have about making this change?"

Reflecting change talk can also encourage exploration of circumstantial content. By summarizing change talk, advisors collect the different change statements made by the student to enhance motivation. By selectively referring to resistance in the past tense and change talk in the present tense, the advisor helps push the student toward the desired outcome.

In a nondirective situation, the advisor can provide support as the student attempts to resolve ambivalence and make a decision about change itself. In this situation the advisor can help the student select goals by exploring both sides of an issue and clarify values by helping the student identify areas he or she deems most important.

Tackling Resistance

Resistance early in the process is often related to withdrawing and decreased likelihood of behavior change (Martino & Hopfer, 2009). Resistance can be manifested through arguing, challenging, discounting, expressing hostility, interrupting, and ignoring (Miller & Rollnick, 2010b).

Strategies for responding to resistance include, among others, reflective listening statements. Miller and Rollnick (2002) discussed simple, amplified, and double-sided

reflections as well as the processes of shifting focus, reframing, agreeing with a twist, emphasizing personal choice and control, and coming alongside as possible methods to deal with resistance.

Through simple reflection, advisors respond to resistance with nonresistance. Acknowledgment of the student's feelings can remove defensiveness and allow the student to further explore emotions related to the issue. In this scenario, a student may say, "I'm trying; I just wish the teacher would leave me alone," to which the advisor replies, "You are working at doing better."

In an amplified reflection, the advisor responds to resistance in an exaggerated form. While done with empathy, it makes students back off and explore their ambivalence from a different perspective. For example, a student may express frustration in the following way: "I can't give up going out at night. What would my friends think?" The advisor, using an exaggerated response may challenge the advisee: "You couldn't handle how your friends would react."

A double-sided reflection captures both sides of the ambivalence from the student's perspective. A student says, "I know that you are trying to help me, I am just not going to change." The advisor responds, "On one hand, you feel that there are some issues to address that I am trying to help you with, and on the other hand, my suggestions are not acceptable."

To shift attention away from a seemingly big barrier to change, the advisor, in general, defuses the initial concern of the student to change, then directs the conversation toward a more workable solution. Through reframing, the advisor reinterprets the student's concerns to provide a new meaning or interpretation of the situation (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). To agree with a twist, an advisor offers initial agreement as well as a slight change of direction or a reflection followed by a reframe. In all strategies, by emphasizing personal choice and control, the advisor acknowledges to the student that the final decision rests upon her or him.

Creating Readiness

MI involves building intrinsic motivation and a commitment to change. Therefore, advisors need to look for signs of readiness for change, including decreased resistance or discussion about the problem, resolve, change talk, and questions about change as well as indications of envisioning and experimenting. To start the process with change talk, an advisor can use the following question as offered by Miller and Rollnick (2010b): "What changes, if any, are you thinking about making to help your academic situation?"

As the process continues, the expertise of the advisor becomes more applicable because the student may be ready for information, including that regarding resources. In the interaction, the advisor should only seek to enhance the motivation of the student to change by encouraging setting goals, considering change options, arriving at a strategy, and eliciting commitment (Miller & Rollnick, 2010b). An advisor might

ask the following question to start a discussion on goals: "How would you like things to be different?"

To keep the student thinking about solutions, the advisor can introduce brainstorming, an effective approach when considering change options and implementation plans. Brainstorming used to initiate the planning process often begins when an advisor utilizes an open question such as, "What do you think is the first step?"

Planning

The relational factors of safety and acceptance created in the advising environment begin to promote positive change (Miller, 1983). By providing validation and optimism, the advisor thus increases motivation to make the needed changes. The following question creates student optimism: "What makes you think you will be successful in making this change?"

In the safe environment they have created, advisors must appropriately confront advisees about the consequences of leaving issues unaddressed. Advisors may be hesitant to challenge students for fear of the implications if the dialogue does not go as planned. However, advisors must call attention to discrepancies and inconsistencies between words and behaviors, or behaviors, values, and goals demonstrated by the advisee. Advisors should confront in a concise, strong, and nonjudgmental tone of voice about the words and behaviors of the advisee:

> You say your academics are a priority for you. However, we are 6 weeks into the semester and I have reports from your instructors stating that you have missed at least one class every week and failed to complete all of the assignments. The good news is we are only 6 weeks into the semester. What ideas do you have for addressing these issues?

While presenting discrepancies, information, and concern, advisors must recognize that the choice of the advisee should never be questioned. Once the student has determined what to change, the advisor takes the next steps: eliciting commitment, initiating the plan, and encouraging the student to implement the change. At the conclusion of the advising session, the advisor can reiterate the main points discussed, reminding students of the given strength value for the change issue, issuing a brief description of the advisor's beliefs about the advisee's strongest strength, and offering affirming words that encourage the advisee to higher levels of self-efficacy.

Prochaska and DiClemente Stages of Change

The transtheoretical model (TTM), introduced by Prochaska and DiClemente (1984), provides a format for demonstrating individual progression, and sometimes regres-

sion, on a continuum of behavioral change along five stages. While Miller and Rollnick (2009) stated that MI is not based on it, the TTM evolved in the same time frame, and characteristics of the models show a logical connection. The TTM provides a conceptualization of the manner and reasons change occurs over time through six stages: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997).

During the precontemplation stage, people are not intending to take action in the foreseeable future (usually measured as 6 months). Students in the precontemplation stage may be unaware of the ways their current behaviors or decisions exert negative effects on their academic or personal development, or they may have attempted change in the past without success. In the contemplation stage, an individual intends to change in the next 6 months. A student in the contemplation stage may be aware of the pros of change, but also is cognizant of the cons associated with it. Preparation involves the intent to take action in the immediate future, typically within the next month. Students in the preparation stage develop a plan of action to elicit change. In the action stage, the student has made changes in behavior within the past 6 months. Maintenance involves working to prevent relapse and is estimated to last from 6 months to 5 years (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). An advisor who knows the student's stage of change can determine appropriate MI strategies (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Stages of change and motivational interview strategies

Stage of Change	Motivational Interview Strategies
Precontemplation The student is unwilling, unable, or uncommitted to change.	○ Establish rapport ○ Elicit student's perception of problem ○ Explore pros and cons of behavior ○ Express concern, keeping door open
Contemplation The student acknowledges concerns and considers change.	○ Discuss ambivalence ○ Examine student's values in relationship to change ○ Emphasize student's free choice
Preparation The student is committed to making change in the near future.	○ Clarify goals and strategies for change ○ Offer menu of options for change ○ Enlist social support
Action The student is actively taking steps to change, but is not at the maintenance level.	○ Encourage student to maintain behavior ○ Help identify high-risk situations ○ Assist in finding support for change

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (1999).

Best Practices

Academic advisors must be knowledgeable and skilled in the theoretical frameworks and best practices with impact on the academic and career needs of their students. Academic advisors select student development theories, strategies, and interventions to implement in their advising programs based on a number of factors: advisor's strengths, skills, and knowledge base in pedagogical content as well as the needs and developmental levels of the advisee. They accept the challenge to implement an approach that will help them to fulfill their important responsibility of "supporting and facilitating students' career and academic planning and development" (Hughey & Hughey, 2009, p. 1).

MI offers an effective approach and provides a framework to inspire and promote success. Flexibility, creativity, and ability to think strategically are critical to success in the workforce of the future. Casner-Lotto and Barrington (2006) emphasized the following knowledge and skills that research has shown to be most important to future career success: a) critical thinking and problem solving, b) information technology application, c) proficiency in teamwork and collaboration, d) creativity and innovation, and e) appreciation for diversity. Furthermore, Feller and O'Bruba (2009) stated, "Commitment to maximizing advisees' strengths, articulating concrete goals, and building action plans captures how advisors add value" (pp. 39–40). The MI approach offers appropriate strategies for skill building and value added.

Motivational Interview Response

Because the workplace and economy call for those who appreciate the lifelong learning and change processes, students should be prepared when they leave an educational institution to transition throughout their personal lives and professional careers, and advising plans, created through thoughtful insight and evolving as an advisee matures, should incorporate goals for change behaviors. Based on collaboration between advisor and advisee, the advising plan requires advisees to articulate specific long- and short-term goals, consider the barriers to achieving maximum success, and list specific solutions to overcome obstacles (Figler & Bolles, 2007). The plans should include discussions of the advisee's network and support systems necessary for success in change behaviors. Feller and O'Bruba (2009) recommended that advisors provide homework assignments that reinforce learning as a lifelong process and keep students engaged in the steps necessary to meet long-term goals.

Motivational Interview Scenarios

Scenario I

A first-generation college sophomore, Riley, says to an advisor, Skylar, "I'm having trouble in two of my classes. I don't understand what the professor is talking about in one of them, but it's a required course in my major. The other is only a gen ed course,

but I keep getting low grades on the writing assignments. I was always good in writing in high school. If I do poorly, this will lower my GPA, and I just got off academic probation last term. I want to stay in my major, but I don't know if I can pass this one course and that would really disappoint my family. What do you suggest I do?"

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In this scenario, Skylar creates rapport with Riley based on mutual collaboration and respect. Using a nonjudgmental tone of voice and demonstrating genuine interest, Skylar engages Riley in a discussion of goals, issues, values, behaviors, as well as the need and motivation to change. First, Skylar could begin the session, using one of the following suggestions, with the goal of setting the agenda and clarifying the presenting issues for Riley:

- Tell me about your ultimate career goal. What do you see as your strengths? Describe your passions.
- I commend you for meeting with me to discuss these important academic issues. It takes courage to be honest about difficult topics.
- What are your academic goals? Specifically, what is your goal for a grade in each of the courses?

Skylar could specifically start with the rating: "On a scale of 0 to 10, with *0* being not at all important and *10* being very important, how important do you think it is for you to improve your academics and earn a B in each course?" If Riley responds by saying "a 9," Skylar follows up by prompting, "What keeps it from being a 10?" and "What would it take for you to get to 10?" A response of "10" means that Riley probably has a good understanding of the need for the change and is open to continue the discussion toward implementing it. Operationalizing the plan for Riley includes changing the behaviors that create barriers to academic success, making a commitment to engage in the new behaviors, which might include involving others, following through with the commitment by writing an action plan, and ultimately completing the action. The change talk could proceed as follows:

SKYLAR: "What are two critical behaviors you believe you would need to change to improve your academic standing? How do your current behaviors fit with your career goals?"

RILEY: "I probably need to stop partying on Wednesday and Thursday nights and missing classes the following mornings. I also tend to get sidetracked when I try to study."

SKYLAR: "Tell me your version of what is going on the nights you decide to go out with your friends and party. What is your interpretation of the benefits of those nights?"

During the discussion with Riley on behavior modification, Skylar promotes greater awareness of the ways partying affects Riley's academic goals. With the intent of increasing Riley's motivation and commitment to change, Skylar makes evocative statements such as the following examples illustrate:

- I hear you saying that all of your friends party. Partying helps you to relax, not to think about the troubles you are having in your courses, the stress of school, and the disappointment you feel about your grades. You enjoy drinking with your friends because it is more fun than sitting in your room studying for courses you do not enjoy. It sounds like you might be afraid of being lonely if you stay home studying while others are out drinking.

- In the past, the positives about partying with your friends during the week outweighed the negatives. Going out helped you feel good about your social life and helped you to cope with not having the grades you need and want. However, now it seems partying during the week only seems to be making your grades worse and perhaps making you feel more anxious about your courses and the reality of being forced to leave school for academic reasons.

Skylar could further assist Riley in reflecting ambivalence to change by using a double-sided reflection: "On one hand, I hear you saying you realize if your grades do not improve you will likely have to leave school. On the other hand, you enjoy partying with your friends during the week. And, you believe there is a direct correlation between partying during the week with your friends and your grades."

Continually encouraging an advisee to consider the future helps him or her to stay focused on long- and short-term goals. With the following questions, Skylar directs Riley toward seeing two extreme outcomes:

- What is the worst thing that would happen if you stopped partying on weeknights?
- What is the best thing that could happen if you stopped partying on weeknights?
- Close your eyes and consider for a minute what your life would look like if you changed these behaviors exactly as you want.

This thread encourages the advisee to see and feel differences created by changing behaviors. Acknowledgments about the need to change and expressions of a desire to do so sometimes fail to coincide with an intention to change. An advisor needs to measure the strength of commitment to change by evaluating the language of the student. Verbs indicating a high commitment to change include *will, intend, plan, guarantee, resolve, swear,* and *promise.*

Change is difficult. Sometimes afraid of failure, students choose to maintain ineffective, familiar behaviors rather than risk adopting new behaviors with unknown consequences. The advisor can help by expressing optimism in the student's ability to be successful in the change process.

Specifically, Skylar should validate any willingness of Riley to reject peer pressure and acknowledge the courage and hard work necessary to make changes to achieve significant goals. Skylar might consider using some of the following inquiries with Riley:

- What difficult goals have you achieved in the past? What strategies did you use to be successful with those goals? Could you tell me more about that?
- What strategies worked for you last semester?
- What would you like to see changed this semester?

Advisors need to affirm the good decisions the student has made in previous semesters. When they do not achieve the expected academic success, students sometime feel embarrassed and appreciate affirming statements from an advisor.

Students are more likely to engage and sustain change if they have strong self-efficacy. Advisors can reinforce self-efficacy by prompting students to articulate their own successes:

- You have made good decisions and good grades in the past. I'm sure you can make good decisions and good grades again.

- What has been your greatest academic success in school?
- What worked best for you in the past when you experienced academic difficulties?

Specifically, Skylar may employ thought-provoking inducements with the goal of bolstering Riley's self-efficacy for change:

- There are pros and cons to making behavior changes in your life. To achieve your goals, it seems that you might need to change your behaviors that are not working for you.
- What are the not-so-good things about change?
- What won't you like?
- How will this affect you?
- What are the good things about change?
- How will it affect you?
- I hear you saying that if you choose not to party and to stay home and implement different study tools, you could have more energy to devote to the study process, have more time to meet with a tutor, and have a greater opportunity to enhance your learning and academic performance. However, making this change would mean finding new strategies to deal with the stress in your life and other times to spend time with your friends in social settings.

An advisee may offer discrepant statements without being cognitively aware of the conflict. In a concerned yet nonjudgmental or angry tone of voice, a skilled advisor will make the student aware of the disparities in the thoughts, feelings, behaviors, or goals based on previous statements or actions. By presenting contradictions, Skylar helps Riley discover and address unrevealed issues. Through heightened awareness of behaviors inconsistent with goals and values, students may experience the growth that leads to change. Therefore, Skylar may point out to Riley, "I am concerned because, on one hand, you say you want to improve your grades and make B's in your courses. On the other hand, you just shared with me that you went drinking with your friends Wednesday and Thursday nights and missed Thursday and Friday morning classes."

Skylar would then seek to engage Riley in change talk and strengthen the desire and direction of the discussion by asking for elaborations on the needed adjustments, past experiences, and the important positives that could result in reduced weeknight partying. The discussion could include the following advisor statements and questions:

- There is usually more than one possible course of action.
- I can tell you about what's worked for other people.
- You are the best judge of what works for you.
- Let's think about several ideas and strategies; what might be a few of the barriers that would keep these ideas from being successful?
- I have some ideas about how you could improve your academic habits, study skills, and grades. However, I am interested in your ideas. What can you suggest?
- What do you think best suits your learning preferences, strengths, passions, and interests?
- What do you think you can or could do?
- Which solution makes the most sense to you?

- What happened the last time you tried to make a change in your behavior?
- How will it be different this time?
- Let's be specific with strategies for when the barriers block the way of success again.

An advisor can increase an advisee's commitment to change by placing goals on paper and asking the student to sign the document. Such documentation also makes the goals seem more concrete. Skylar may implement the following strategy with Riley:

"Riley, please write down three statements about changes that you are going to make within the next week, the next month, and the next six months."

After Riley responds, Skylar could continue:

You might not be aware of the tutoring services scheduled this semester in the University Learning Center. I have a copy of the schedule to share with you. In addition, I am giving you a handbook of study skills and time management strategies. I encourage you to spend Wednesday and Thursday evenings with the tutor in the University Learning Center. Because I have seen your transcript and know you have been academically successful in the previous years, and I have heard you say that you know your education is critical to your career goals, I am confident that you can earn B's in these courses. You indicated a desire of 9 and maybe a 10 on a scale of desire to change behaviors. Your desire and willingness are present. Of course, the decisions to make the changes are *your* decisions to make. I am here to help and support you. However, *you* will be the person who must live with the consequences of your decisions for a lifetime.

Summary

Fried (2006) stated one of the foremost goals of higher education is to transform a student mentally, physically, and emotionally and elevate each aspect to a higher level. Academic advisors possess the ability to empower advisees academically, personally, and socially to result in enhanced career and professional opportunities. MI offers an approach for academic advisors to implement to help in this transformation process.

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