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# Motivational Interviewing

## Do

Use the process described by *Rollnick & Miller (1995)* to help the person explore their mixed feelings about proposed changes.

## Story

'Kevin was homeless, abusing alcohol, experiencing mental health issues and had several convictions for assault. Staff used Motivational Interviewing to help him explore what he wanted to do with his life. Daily walks and conversation allowed Kevin to talk about what was good and not so good about

his life. Gradually the worker found out that Kevin wanted to have his own place, but that his confidence in being able to keep housing was low. After four months, Kevin was taking medication. Soon afterwards he applied for and was accepted by a residential treatment setting where he was able to stop substance use, take some classes, and become involved in Alcoholics Anonymous. He stayed there for two years and then moved into his own apartment. He reconnected with one of his children, and was proud to be involved with her family.' (SAMHSA 2005)

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### Hints & Hazards

This approach is one of the outcomes of the Stages of Change model. Unlike confrontational approaches, it recognises ambivalence to change and assumes that this is a natural response. Therapists assist the person to work through this ambivalence and move towards changes in behaviour. The various techniques support the person's empowerment and confidence in their ability to change. The Stages of Change model has also been used with students who have mental health issues (*see Mather & Atkinson 2003, pp10-12*).

Whilst Motivational Interviewing is about ambiguity, it is worth noting here that enthusiasm is infectious and people often catch motivation from the person who is supporting them. A lack of motivation may be the result of an unmotivated or disliked supporter, group leader or group members.