

## Assessing the Effectiveness of Online training program for Developing Motivational Interviewing Skills in Social workers

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### Abstract

The current study aimed to assessment the effectiveness of online training program in developing motivational interviewing skills for a sample consisted of (16) social workers, they are working in social work profession, and practicing different approaches to professional intervention. The sample was divided into two groups, the first group received an online training program using Internet technologies and modern group communication programs such as Zoom program, and the second group relied on self-training by reading translated texts in cognitions and skills of motivational interviewing, and reviewing some literature published on the websites. The tools of the studywere Motivational Interviewing Questionnaire (MIQ) which prepared by Young (2010), translated into Arabic by Gado (2015), and an online training program consisted of a 12- training hour, the program consisted of workshops for training on motivational interviewing skills. The results indicated the effectiveness of the online training program provided for the first group, but there was no effectiveness for the self-training group. An appropriate feedback for both groups was introduced.

**Key Words:** Motivational Interviewing (MI), online training program, Self-training, social workers.

### Introduction and Theoretical basis

The concept of Motivational Interviewing (MI) and its initial description appeared as one of the approaches to behavioral change through what William W. Miller presented in 1983. This concept appeared as a result of his studies and the development of his experiences in working in the field of alcoholism and its treatment, then it was developed by Miller and Rollnick in 1993 (Miller & Rollnick, 1995; Willits, Albright, Broidy & Lyons, 2009). The motivational interviewing was found in order to improve the level of motivation of clients towards the desired behavior change, and it is a pre-intervention method for therapeutic or counseling interventions to increase clients' involvement in the therapeutic process and increase their focus to get the desired behavior change (Lundahl, Kunz, Brownell, Tollefson, & Burke, 2010). Miller and Rollnick (2002) state that the motivational interviewing is one of the types of clinical interviews that depend in its work on increasing the commitment of the client to change his behavior in the best direction, also Miller and Mount (2001) indicated that The motivational interviewing is a collaborative and systematic method between clients and the psychotherapist, that helps clients to clarify their values, motivations, and how that can be

used to bring about the required change, and it confirms the client's independence in choosing when and how to change.

Although many of the motivational interview elements, in reality or in its essence, are not new, and it may have been built largely from models and theories of cognitive methods, but the popularity and expansion that it has reached The use of the motivational interviewing in many areas leads us to the fact that the motivational interviewing combines these methods and approaches in a new style that is unique and distinctive in an innovative way to help clients for change (Solodyna, 2012).

The main goal of a motivation interviewing is to help clients stop problematic behaviors, and more specifically it is a client-centered approach to increase motivation to promote behavior change (Burke, Arkowitz, & Menchola, 2003; Lundahl et al., 2010), And a high effect size of motivational interviewing was found in bringing about the desired behavior change and long-term persistence of the effect (Burke et al., 2003; Solodyna, 2012). The main principles of motivational interviewing have been tried and tested through numerous experiments and empirical and clinical research, the results have indicated their effectiveness, especially with people who have issues of abuse or problems related to motivation (Willits et al., 2009). simply it is like a mediator to ensure the effectiveness of psychotherapy or counseling and bringing about the required change to the client's behavior in a positive direction (Solodyna, 2012), Brown and Miller (1993) indicated that two sessions of the motivational interviewing are sufficient to increase the client's motivation and integration into the treatment program.

The motivational interviewing is based in its work on uncovering ambiguity and focusing on the motivation process of the individual to facilitate change, it differs from motivation-based methods that are predominantly coercive and apparent, as it does not impose change that may be inconsistent with the client's values, beliefs and aspirations, but it supports change that is consistent with client values and concerns (Speck, 2008; Willits et al., 2009), Miller developed the motivational interviewing as a way to help individuals deal with this ambiguity about and commit to change, it marked an evolution of the client-centered therapy for Carl Rogers (Miller, Hettema & Steele, 2005). The background of the motivational interviewing comes on the basis of the initial stages of the indicative relationship, and the initial concept of it revolves around identifying, clarifying and approving the ambiguity and contradiction around the change behavior of the client, this contradiction and ambiguity takes two paths in changing behavior and is seen as a natural stage in the process of change, the clever professional who uses The motivational interviewing is fluent in controlling the client's ambiguity index and his willingness to change, in this he uses the techniques and strategies of the motivational interviewing (Willits et al., 2009). Miller et al. (2005) indicated Most clients who seek treatment or change have some ambiguity or ambivalence about this change. They want the best but at the same time they do not want to take steps in order to get the best they want. In other words, they want change and do not want Striving for it, and In the motivational interviewing, cooperation and participation are the basis of the therapeutic relationship between the psychotherapist and the client, and this does not mean that the psychotherapist automatically agrees with the client about the nature of his problem or about the nature of the appropriate change for this problem (Herschell, Kalko, Baumann & Davis, 2010) .

The motivational interviewing reveals the client's internal discussion of change, whereby the therapist collects expressions of the recent change to know the client's desire, ability to change, causes of change and the need for it (Miller et al., 2005). Thus, clients hear themselves explain their motivations for change and hear Reflections about that from the

therapist, he provides periodically summaries of the change that the client rises, so the motivational interviewing goes through two basic stages; The first focuses on the drive to change, and the second focuses on the reinforcing commitment to change (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Burke et al. (2003) indicated that the motivational interviewing is usually a brief method presented in one or two sessions. It can also be presented as a single intervention method or as a motivational introduction to another treatment method, and it can be combined with other methods in psychotherapy. Miller, Benefield and Tonigan (1993) indicated that One of the most common therapeutic approaches to use motivational interviewing is Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET), MET combines motivational interviewing and feedback to evaluate results.

Motivational interviewing is defined as a collaborative, client-centered method that starts from directing to motivation, to change for evoking and gathering it from the client (Miller & Moyers, 2006), Miller and Rollnick (2002) state that the motivational interviewing is one of the types of Clinical interviews focused on increasing client motivation and commitment to changing their behavior in the best direction. Accordingly, the main concept of the motivational interviewing is centered on identifying, clarifying and confirming the contradiction around behavioral change, where the contradiction is seen as a natural part of the change process (Miller & Rose, 2009). Modern descriptions of the motivational interviewing include three basic elements as follows (Willits et al., 2009): a. Motivational interviewing is a special type of change talk (counseling, therapy, advice, method of communication), b. motivational interviewing is collaborative (client-oriented, participatory, promotes independence), c. The motivational interviewing is powerful (evokes the strength of motivation and commitment). These essential elements are evident in three levels of concepts for the motivational interviewing as follows (Willits et al., 2009; Rose, Phillips & Welch, 2007): a. The systematic personal concept (for what?): Motivational interviewing is a collaborative conversation that strengthens an individual's motivation for and commitment to change. b. Utilitarian training concept (why use it?): Motivational interviewing is a heuristic, person-oriented method of addressing a general problem within a paradox of change. c. Technical therapeutic concept (how does it work?): Motivational interviewing is a collaborative method of goal-oriented communication with a special focus on the language of change, designed to strengthen the individual's motivation to move towards a specific goal by evoking and clarifying one's speech about change.

There are four main principles of motivational interviewing and any therapist who employs the motivational interviewing in his work must observe these four principles during the therapeutic process and these principles are used to apply the intended in the spirit of the motivational interviewing (Rose et al., 2007).

The first principle is expressing empathy, it is also called empathic listening, which means an accurate understanding of the customer's point of view and reach that to him (Moyers et al., 2007). Empathy requires seeing the world from the client's perspective, and thinking about things as the client thinks about them, it also requires feeling things as he feels, and sharing of his experiences (Poirier et al., 2004). The second principle is rolling with resistance, it is a special method of applying and demonstrating empathy for the client while avoiding discussion and talking about his problems and negatives, and it is an attempt to accurately understand the client's reluctance to change (Rose et al., 2007), and in a motivational interview, therapists avoid increasing resistance not through confrontation, but are working to calm down and avoid negative interaction (Miller, Moyers, Ernest & Amrhein, 2003). The third principle is developing discrepancy, this principle means helping clients to become

aware of the contradiction around change, which is the conflict between current behavior on one side and values and goals on the other (Moyers et al., 2005), The principle of developing discrepancy is due to the fact that the motivation for change appears when customers perceive the difference. The discrepancy between their current reality and their aspirations, desires and goals that they want to achieve, in other words the understanding of the conflict between "where they are" and "where they want to be" (Rosengren, 2009). The fourth principle is supporting self-efficacy, it is important to sharpen clients' energy and provide the option to facilitate client commitment and move towards change (Rose et al., 2007). The strength of the motivational interviewing is that it is a method that believes that the client has inside him the ability to change successfully, and that the client's belief that change is possible (Self-efficacy) needs to be supported and strengthened for this hope, especially with regard to difficult changes (Waldo, 2014).

Motivational interviewing strategies and techniques: Motivational interviewing training requires the skillful use of basic techniques to find the spirit of the motivational interviewing and achieve its principles, directing the process towards collecting or evoking the change in the client and adhering to it, and the recent change entails verbal statements and non-verbal communication indicating that the client takes into account the possibility of change (Miller & Rollnick, 1995; Miller, 1996).

The basic skills in the motivational interviewing are summarized into two types of strategic skills, the first skill is called micro-counseling skills and symbolized by "OARS", they are abbreviations for the techniques by which this skill is achieved, and the second skill is change talk skill (Rollnick et al., 2008). For "OARS" skills, it is a shorthand method for the main entry used in a motivational interviewing, it also called micro counseling Skills (Solodyna, 2012), the letter O means "Open ended questions", A means "Affirmation", R means "Reflection", and S means "Summaries" (Miller & Moyers, 2006). The second type of strategic skills, called change talk, it is defined as expressions issued by the client that show interest for commitment to change, and in the motivational interviewing the therapist directs the client to expressions of the changed talk as if they are the pathway towards change, the research results indicated that there is a strong relationship between the client's talk about the change and different levels of success in behavior change, and that the individual who is more talking about the change is the most successful at changing (Miller, Yahne, Moyers, Martinez & Pirritano, 2004; Allen et al., 2001).

Miller & Moyers (2006) pointed out that there are eight stages of motivational interviewing that must be trained on, and each of these stages is one of the skills of the motivational interviewing, these stages are: a. Motivational interview spirit, b. Client-centered skill development, c. Appreciating and reinforcing the customer's talk about the change, d. Summaries of recent change, e. Getting around the resistance of the customer, f. Create a plan for change, g. Enhance customer commitment, h. Flexible shift between motivational interview and other methods of intervention. Brug et al. (2007) indicated The client's resistance appears when the client faces a conflict between his view of the problem and how to solve it and the psychotherapist's view of the problem and how to solve it. Resistance also appears when the client feels that his freedom and independence is being robbed of him or being besieged.

Many researches were conducted to study the effectiveness of training in motivational interviewing skills, and it was on various samples of psychological counselors, psychotherapists, graduate students specializing in psychology, social workers and other workers in the field of providing psychological support for others, Miller et al. (1993)

studied a training program effectiveness for a group of psychological counselors to train them in the motivational interview skills, and the results indicated a decrease in the level of resistance of clients who undergo counseling programs with the trained counselors after using motivational interviewing method with them. A training program on motivational interviewing and its skills was presented in the study of Bala (2001) for medicine students to know the effectiveness of training on motivational interviewing skills in improving communication skills and self-confidence of the students and its reflection on their interaction with their patients, and in study for Miller & Mount (2001) aimed to know the effect of 16-hour training workshops on motivational interviewing skills and techniques in improving cognitive and skill aspects, The results of the study indicated the effectiveness of the training program. Also Miller et al. (2005) conducted a study on the effectiveness of motivational interviewing training on a sample of (72) clinical specialists who work on problems of the type of goal problems such as the goal of life, and Moyers et al. (2007) investigated the effect of training on the motivational interview of a group of health and behavioral services workers in the US Air Force, they found that the training program was effectiveness, also Training in motivational interviewing skills was effective in the two-day program (Schoener, Madeja, Henderson, Ondersma&Janisse, 2006). And many other studies were conducted with the aim of studying the effectiveness of training in motivational interviewing skills on variety samples of different ages and educational levels.

So the current study aimed to assessment the effectiveness of an online training program provided to a sample of social workers to train them in the techniques and skills of motivational interviewing according to the model presented by Miller and Moyers (2006) of eight stages, and compare between two groups, the first

### **Sample of Study**

The sample of current study consisted of (16) social workers from Egypt, who practice the profession, the sample was divided into two groups, the first consisted of (10) participants, they received an online training program for 12 hours workshops, and the second group by the method of self-training, they did not receive direct training, but relied on reading some translated files on the motivational interview and the information sources available on websites.

### **Tools**

Motivational Interviewing Questionnaire (MIQ): Young (2010) designed the motivational interviewing questionnaire, which is an evolution of the tool developed by Miller and Mount (2001) to measure cognitive and skill aspects of the motivational interviewing. MIQ consists of (12) items of the type of self-report to assess the trainees 'understanding and knowledge of the basic ideas of motivational interviewing and its principles, and their sense of professionalism in their ability to use the motivational interviewing in their work. MIQ scores are between 12-60 degrees, the lower degree indicates less knowledge and skill, while a higher degree indicates higher knowledge and skill.

Gado (2015) translated MIQ into Arabic and calculate its coefficients of validity and reliability, the validity of internal consistency was calculated by finding the correlation coefficients between the score for each item and the total score on the questionnaire.

**Table (1): correlation coefficients between the score for each item and the total score on MIQ**

Items	Correlations	Items	Correlations
1	0.416**	7	0.391**
2	0.442**	8	0.563**
3	0.617**	9	0.473**
4	0.508**	10	0.430**
5	0.382**	11	0.364**
6	0.622**	12	0.577**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**Table (2): Reliability Statistics**

Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Split half
12	0.822	0.742

The Training Program: In its construction and idea, the program relied on the model of the eight stages of the motivational interviewing proposed by Miller & Moyers (2006) and followed it with many studies and research on different samples with the aim of verifying the effectiveness of training on the motivational interview in imparting its skills to these samples, and also verifying its various therapeutic benefits, These eight stages of the motivational interviewing that were relied upon in building and implementing the current program are as follows: Motivational interview spirit, Client-centered skill development, Appreciating and reinforcing the customer’s talk about the change, Summaries of recent change, Getting around the resistance of the customer, Create a plan for change, Enhance customer commitment, Flexible shift between motivational interview and other methods of intervention. Training was conducted on reflexive listening skills "OARS", types of reflections, affirmations, open questions, and summaries, and training on ways to circumvent client resistance and evoke change talk, set goals and reinforce change talk. The training program was provided over (12) hours, divided into workshops, on the first group, and the second group depended on self-training.

## Results and Discussion

For Assessing the Effectiveness of the training program for Developing Motivational Interviewing Skills in the two groups, the pre-test was performed by using MIQ, for both groups, the workshop training group and the self-training group, the Wilcoxon test was used to study the differences between the pre-test and the post-test in both groups. The results as the following:

**Table (3): Descriptive Statistics for the First Group**

test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	10	13.300	0.948	12	15
Post-test	10	20.500	2.838	16	26

Follow-test	10	20.900	2.643	17	25
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**Table (4): Ranks and test statistics for the First Group**

Test	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sign
Post-test – Pre-test	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	2.809	0.005
	Positive Ranks	10	5	55		
	Ties	0				
	Total	10				
Follow test – Post-test	Negative Ranks	3	5	15	0.921	0.357
	Positive Ranks	6	5	30		
	Ties	1				
	Total	10				



Figure (1): pre-test and post-test for the training group

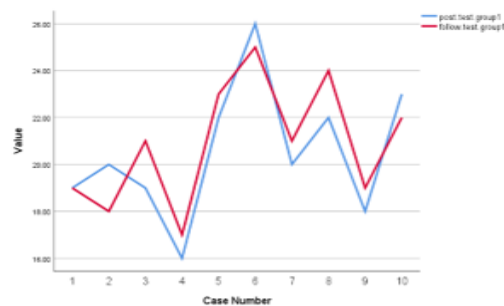


Figure (2): post-test and follow-test for the training group

from tables (3, 4) for the first group, it was found that the value of "Z" on Wilcoxon test was significant. So the differences between the means rank of post-test and pre-test were significant, Which means the effectiveness of the online training program used for Developing Motivational Interviewing Skills in group1, and the differences between the means rank of follow-test and post-test were not significant, this indicates the continuity of the program effectiveness after the following period (20 days) has passed.

**Table (5): Descriptive Statistics for the second Group**

test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	6	12.500	0.547	12	13
Post-test	6	12.833	0.752	12	14
Follow-test	6	12.666	0.816	12	14

**Table (6): Ranks and test statistics for the second Group**

Test	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sign
Post-test – Pre-test	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	1.414	0.157
	Positive Ranks	2	1.5	3		
	Ties	4				
	Total	6				
Follow test – Post-test	Negative Ranks	2	2	4	-0.577	0.564
	Positive Ranks	1	2	2		
	Ties	3				
	Total	6				

From tables (5, 6) for the second group (self-training group), it was found that the value of "Z" on Wilcoxon test was not significant. So the differences between the means rank of post-test and pre-test were not significant, which means there was not effectiveness of the self-training in the second group for Developing Motivational Interviewing Skills, and the differences between the means rank of follow-test and post-test also were not significant.

The results of the current study confirm the effectiveness of the training program used in improving the skills of the first group in the motivational interviewing, and although the scores of group 2 members on the MIQ after applying the training program were below average, but the differences between the pre-test and post-test were statistically significant. The reason for this is that the topic of the motivational interviewing was new to the study sample, and their scores were low on the questionnaire used in the study, as they had not idea about the motivational interviewing before, and certainly did not use its skills in their work as social workers, and despite the effectiveness of the online training program in developing motivational interviewing skills, but its effect was not very strong, also, self-training was not effective. And Madson, Loignon & Lane (2009) stated that there is a dearth of studies in the field of training in motivational interviewing skills conducted on graduate students from humanistic professions such as psychological counseling and social work and that there is a need to clarify the reality of motivational interviewing exercises in Postgraduate students in these professions, as indicated by Lundahl & Burke (2009) that training in motivational interviewing with psychologists and clinicians is insufficient and more training must be made with these groups, also Miller & Rollnick (2009) reported that, The field of motivational interviewing and training research in this area doubles every three years. It should be noted that in a large number of studies, the effectiveness of the programs was not continued during the follow-up period (Miller et al., 1993; Miller & Mount, 2001; Hetteema et al., 2005; White et al., 2007), This is worth studying for reasons and ways of improvement.

### Conclusion

The improvement that occurred to the first group (training group) in acquiring the knowledge and skills of the motivational interviewing to the ease of application, use and learning, especially with professionals interested in the field of social work and psychological counselors, especially those working with people have motivation problems and behavioral problems, and Despite the simplicity of the motivational interviewing method and the short



period of training on it, it is difficult to reach the level of craftsmanship in it through self-learning, and training on her skills must be necessary.

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