Motivational Interviewing in Schools
Strategies for Engaging Parents, Teachers, and Students

Keith C. Herman, PhD, Wendy M. Reinke, PhD, Andy J. Frey, PhD, Stephanie A. Shepard, PhD

“The authors of this book have made a very important contribution in producing a book that literally provides a roadmap for how to realize MI’s potential in school and family contexts. . . .The content coverage of the book’s chapters and its strong focus on the development of tools, strategies, and detailed, relevant examples of MI implementation in schools and also with families are, in my view, truly exemplary. . . .I recommend it unconditionally as an invaluable resource for today’s related services professional.”

Hill Walker, PhD, University of Oregon

This is the first book on applying motivational interviewing (MI)—a powerful, evidence-based technique for facilitating behavior change—throughout the school environment to help psychologists, counselors, and other school-based professionals improve the effectiveness of their practice.

Based on encouraging research on the value of MI in K–12 settings, this practical book explains the basic elements of MI theory and demonstrates, step by step, how the four-stage process of engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning can be used with the families of students who need psychological or counseling services, teachers who need consultation and support to improve classroom management, and the students themselves. The book discusses barriers to readiness to change and describes how to foster engagement and compliance with school services to increase the likelihood that positive change will occur. It also describes how MI can be used to increase the effectiveness of interprofessional teams in school settings, along with ways in which MI can be integrated into and build support for already established programs. Richly illustrated with examples of using MI as a strategy for promoting everyday conversations about change—the nucleus of MI practice—the book also includes case studies and sample handouts for mental health professionals, students, family members, and teachers.

Key Features:
- Demonstrates how to apply MI to the K–12 environment to help school professionals improve effectiveness
- Explains the four-stage process of engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning
- Shows how MI can be used with children, their families, and teachers to facilitate change
- Describes how MI can be integrated into other established programs
- Includes plentiful case studies and examples of MI as a strategy for promoting everyday conversations about change
Motivational Interviewing in Schools
Keith C. Herman, PhD, is a professor in counseling psychology at the University of Missouri and codirects the Missouri Prevention Center. He is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MI^N). Prior to his faculty appointment he worked as a school psychologist in an Oregon school district. He presents nationally and has published over 80 peer-reviewed articles and chapters. He serves on the editorial boards of School Psychology Quarterly and Journal of Counseling Psychology and is coauthor of two professional books: Academic and Behavior Supports for At-Risk Students: Tier 2 Intervention (2012) and Motivational Interviewing for Effective Classroom Management: The Classroom Check-Up (2011). Much of his research and applied work focuses on using motivational interviewing (MI) with teachers and families to promote effective environments for youth. He is a coinvestigator with Johns Hopkins Center for Prevention and Early Intervention, where his primary role has been to develop MI-based consultation strategies for school professionals working with teachers, parents, and students; train these school professionals to deliver these methods with high fidelity; and evaluate the impact of the use of these methods on teacher, parent, and student outcomes.

Wendy M. Reinke, PhD, is an associate professor in school psychology at the University of Missouri and codirector of the Missouri Prevention Center. She has worked in a variety of school consultation settings, including as a school psychologist in an elementary school and as a behavior consultant in the Baltimore City School District. She developed the Classroom Check-Up, an assessment-based classwide teacher consultation model. Her research focuses on the prevention of disruptive behavior problems in children and increasing school-based implementation of evidence-based practices. She presents nationally, has published dozens of peer-reviewed articles, and has coauthored two books, Academic and Behavior Supports for At-Risk Students: Tier 2 Intervention (2012) and Motivational Interviewing for Effective Classroom Management: The Classroom Check-Up (2011). She is the principal investigator on a multimillion-dollar trial funded by the U.S. Institute of Education Sciences to evaluate the efficacy of a teacher classroom management intervention. She is also a coinvestigator with the Center for Prevention and Early Intervention. She is charged with developing and evaluating MI methods for promoting school engagement.

Andy J. Frey, PhD, earned his MSW from the University of Michigan in 1994 and his PhD from the University of Denver in 2000. He is currently an associate professor at the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville. Before joining the faculty at the University of Louisville, he was a school social worker and behavioral consultant in Douglas County Schools, Colorado. He is the author of over 30 book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles and serves on the editorial board of Children and Schools. His primary interest areas include positive behavior support, social and emotional competence in preschoolers, early intervention, and the provision of school social work services. He has a developmental grant from the U.S. Institute of Education Sciences to integrate MI consultation strategies with the First Step to Success program. As part of this project, his team has developed protocols for training school personnel to use MI with families and teachers and for monitoring implementation fidelity.

Stephanie A. Shepard, PhD, is an assistant professor with Brown University’s School of Medicine. She received a Career Development Award from the National Institute of Mental Health to integrate the MI-based Family Check-Up and other engagement strategies with the well-established parenting intervention, the Incredible Years. She has authored over 30 book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed publications. She has trained a cadre of school professionals across the nation to use these methods to promote parent and staff involvement and motivation.
Motivational Interviewing in Schools
Strategies for Engaging Parents, Teachers, and Students

Keith C. Herman, PhD
Wendy M. Reinke, PhD
Andy J. Frey, PhD
Stephanie A. Shepard, PhD
Keith: To James and Marilyn Herman, for instilling in me a commitment to lifelong learning

Wendy: To Alex and Jenny Reinke, for encouraging me throughout my life to reach for the stars and beyond

Andy: To Shannon, my wife and best friend, with love and thanks for helping me achieve my personal and professional goals

Stephanie: To my son, Henry Richard Umaschi
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It is fun when life comes full circle. The story of how this book came to be is full of circles. The earliest beginnings of this book can be traced to Providence, Rhode Island, in the late 1990s. Keith Herman and Wendy Reinke were working on a set of research projects at Brown University, one of them involving the use of motivational interviewing (MI) to encourage teens to quit smoking cigarettes. Keith was a research therapist on the project and was trained to use MI by Jacki Hecht, an early member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers. Like most people when they first learn this method, Keith caught the MI bug immediately. Once you catch it and then really learn MI, it forever permeates everything you do and how you think about the world.

Fast forward a few years to a dinner conversation between Wendy and Keith at a convention in New Orleans. Wendy was now a graduate student at the University of Oregon, and she was working with Tom Dishion, who had developed a family application of MI called the Family Check-Up. In her work as a school psychologist, Wendy sensed that there was a need for a similar type of approach for teachers. While Wendy and Keith were brainstorming over dinner and during walks throughout the city, the Classroom Check-Up (the CCU) was born. The CCU is now an empirically supported teacher consultation model based on MI.

As fate would have it, Stephanie Shepard was working with Tom Dishion at the University of Oregon around the same time as Wendy, but the two hadn’t met in Oregon. The year Wendy began her training with Tom, Stephanie departed for her internship at Boston University Consortium. She then completed her fellowship at Brown University in the same lab Wendy had worked in many years before (noticing the circles yet?). Stephanie continued on in a faculty position at Brown and became an expert at integrating the Family Check-Up with family interventions, especially the well-established parenting program, the Incredible Years.

Fast forward a few years again, when Wendy and Keith were working as part of the Center for Prevention and Early Intervention (CPEI) at Johns Hopkins. The CPEI was in part intended to bring together scholars who were developing
integrated school-based interventions. They learned of Stephanie’s work on a career development award she received from the National Institute of Mental Health and invited her to a center meeting. During her visit, it became obvious how much the three of us had in common, and how we were all trying to tackle the same challenges of improving services in schools.

The final member of our team, Andy Frey, came to us as a gift from Hill Walker. Wendy worked with Hill during her time at the University of Oregon, and they stayed in touch over the years. Hill, ever generous with his time and committed to supporting the next generation of scholars, contacted her out of the blue one day and said he had someone he wanted her to meet. Hill sensed that Wendy and Andy would hit it off, and he was right. Andy had been working with Hill on a grant to improve parent engagement in the First Step to Success program. He encountered some challenges in teacher engagement to the intervention as well. Hill knew of Wendy’s work with the CCU and thought she would have some insights that Andy would find helpful. As with Stephanie, it was clear that Andy had been working on some of the same challenges in promoting involvement with school-based services.

All four of us believed the MI approach filled an important gap in school-based intervention research and practice. Barely a week would pass without one of us hearing from someone requesting information about school-based MI and a manual for how to do it. While MI has now been around for over two decades, we are just beginning to understand its potential in school settings. Each of us had separately adapted the methods for specific application in our school consultation work ranging from Head Start to high school settings. We decided to write a book together to capitalize on the wide range of experiences each of us has had with MI. We wanted to create a highly accessible resource for school practitioners. Toward that end, the handouts for the book are available for download and use from the Springer Publishing Company website (www.springerpub.com/herman-ancillary).

As you read this book, we hope that you too experience the MI bug, the excitement that comes with realizing the simplicity and truth behind the technique. There is something about it that resonates with people, a realization that the way we have been going about trying to influence people in the past may have been misguided, and a hope that this new way of being with people will make a difference. There is something empowering and exciting about this method that gives you concrete points of leverage to help people make important changes in their lives. Enjoy the journey. May yours be filled with gratifying circles!
Acknowledgments

Wendy Reinke and Keith Herman are grateful to all the teachers, parents, and students who allowed us to pilot elements of the methods described here over the years; we are especially grateful to those who have participated in the studies that formed the foundation for our work.

We also must acknowledge the amazing coaches and school-based consultants who have inspired us over the years. Jennifer Keperling and Sandy Hardee have been two exceptional coaches and long-time champions of the Classroom Check-Up (CCU). They each have inspired us to identify key qualities of effective coaches. In particular, Jenn has an unyielding belief in teachers and their ability to enact change plans. Her spirit of conveying this moves most teachers to action. Sandy displays such a spirit of comfort and ease in her interactions with teachers that nearly all are willing to trust and work with her as their guide, even on the most difficult topics. Lana Asuncion-Bates has emerged as an exemplary CCU coach as well and has made many thoughtful contributions to the model. Jennifer Cox, Kelly Dunn, Courtney Vaughan, and Dana Darney also have provided valuable services and insights based on their efforts at implementing the Family Check-Up and Coping Power programs in urban school settings. Dana and several doctoral students at the University of Missouri, including Lindsay Borden, Tia Shultz, and Nidhi Goel, provided motivational interviewing (MI)-related services to parents, students, and teachers and completed innovative dissertations on MI topics. Each helped advance our thinking about MI and its application in schools. Dr. Lori Newcomer continues to inspire us with her amazing teacher consultation skills and her commitment to teachers and students.

We also would like to acknowledge the Center for Prevention and Early Intervention at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health for ongoing support in the development, adaptation, and evaluation of the various MI applications described in this book. The National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse provided ongoing funding for the center and some of the projects described in this book. We are grateful to Dr. Nick Ialongo, center director, for his ongoing support and encouragement.
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We have been very fortunate to have had many amazing mentors over the years who have influenced many of the ideas we express in this book. Dr. Carolyn Webster-Stratton has inspired and encouraged us for years. Although she does not use the terminology of MI to describe her work or her exceptional clinical skills, her style and extraordinary gifts of connecting and sparking change in others are very much in line with MI. Dr. Tom Dishion has supported us over the years as we attempted to extend his brilliant efforts to apply MI with families. Drs. Randy Sprick and George Sugai have long inspired us with their incredible school consultation skills and the vast positive influence they have had on schools in the United States. Of course, we would be remiss not to acknowledge the original work of Drs. William Miller and Stephen Rollnick, the developers of MI. All MI extensions are merely adaptations of their groundbreaking work.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge our parents and families, especially Wendy and Keith’s daughter, Kennedy, who has attended more professional conferences in her 6 years of life than many adult scholars.

Andy Frey would like to acknowledge his wife (Shannon), parents (Larry Frey and Maureen Frey), and children (Sam and Amelia) for their support and encouragement. He is also grateful for the mentorship he has received from Dr. Hill Walker. Without his support, this work would not have been possible. Additionally, Andy is thankful for Dr. Terri Moyers’s guidance and encouragement. He is also grateful for his many colleagues at the University of Louisville and University of Oregon who have been influential in helping to transport the MI approach to school settings. Finally, he is grateful for the support of the Jefferson County and Greater Clark County Public School Systems. The administrators, teachers, and families he collaborated with to better understand how to use MI were outstanding. It has been an honor to work with them and learn from them. Andy’s work has been supported by an Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education grant that allowed him to develop the enhancements to the First Step to Success program and the Motivational Interviewing Navigation Guide described in this book.

Stephanie Shepard is grateful to all the children, parents, and staff at the Head Start programs in Rhode Island (RI) who participated in her research and helped develop and pilot some of the methods and strategies described in this book. In particular, those at East Bay Community Action Program, Children’s Friend and Service, and the Comprehensive Community Action Program of Cranston. Stephanie also acknowledges the outstanding team of research assistants and students at the Bradley/Hasbro Children’s Research Center, and is particularly grateful to colleagues and trainees who made substantive contributions to the development and testing of the integration of family-, program-,
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Overview of Motivational Interviewing
Background and Rationale

We all know from personal experience that adopting new behaviors and attitudes can be a complicated endeavor. Changing well-established personal behaviors, habits, and routines requires a great deal of commitment and persistence. Thus, it should come as no surprise to us to be met with pushback and resistance when we attempt to stimulate change in complex systems such as schools and families. These systems are composed of individuals with long-standing preferences and habits that have been reinforced, sometimes for years, by the context in which they occur. Expecting these behaviors to change simply because it makes sense to do so runs against the tide of behavioral patterns and usually only leads to frustration when the intended change never happens. Quite often, no amount of education, information exchange, or encouragement is enough to create enduring change in people.

Thus, many school professionals find themselves in a predicament, tasked with improving student outcomes by encouraging adults in their lives to behave differently. Administrators, school psychologists and consultants, special educators, teachers, instructional coaches, and behavior consultants encounter the challenge of trying to influence change at some point in the course of their work with others. If only it were enough to explain to a parent about research showing the benefits of being involved in education to produce an increase in his or her homework participation. If only it were as easy as telling a teacher about the importance of using high rates of specific praise in the classroom to alter their positive to negative ratio of interactions. On the other hand, if it were that easy, the challenges we encounter in schools would likely never have existed in the first place.
I. OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

We actually know a lot about the types of environments that are healthy and that promote student learning and positive adjustment (see Biglan, Flay, Embry, & Sandler, 2012). The irony is that we have devoted most of our science to identifying the characteristics of nurturing environments and much less of it to figuring out how to get people to actually create them. It is as though we have assumed that people will change because it is logical to do so. In this sense, our science has lagged behind common sense. On a personal level, we know that changing a behavior is not often as easy as simply wanting to do so. Fortunately, a strand of research has surfaced in the last two decades focused on this critical aspect of change. From this research comes a new perspective on motivation, an understanding of common factors that undermine readiness to change, and an approach to help move people toward change. The approach, called motivational interviewing (MI), has been developed to address barriers to motivation, foster compliance and engagement with services, and increase the likelihood that positive change will occur. This book is about the application of MI in schools.

THE GOOD AND BAD NEWS

The good news is that if and when people want to change, we actually have a wide range of behavioral technologies to help them be successful. Unfortunately, for much of the 20th century, psychologists excluded from study one of the most important precursors to change: motivation. That is, behavior change technologies too often begin with the assumption that people are ready, willing, and able to change. The reality is that motivation to do anything fluctuates over time. Most people are ambivalent about changing their behavior. Consider these examples:

- A school psychologist checks in with a teacher on the progress of a behavior support plan in the classroom. The teacher responds, “I’m sorry I haven’t gotten to it. It’s the end of the school year, and we are in the midst of testing. Filling out these point sheets is not at the top of my list of things to do.”
- A special educator wants to contact the parents of a student in her class to create a home–school communication system. A colleague who has worked with the parents in prior years tells her, “Good luck with those parents. They’ve never been involved. As far as I can tell, they just don’t care.”
- An administrator tries to meet with another parent to discuss ways the school could support her child. Despite setting up appointments to meet, the parent fails to attend the scheduled appointments twice in a row.
- A teacher is frustrated by the lack of effort from several of her students. She confronts them with the likely reality that they will be unable to achieve any...
of their aspirations without being successful in school. Her warnings fall on deaf ears and the students she was trying to reach continue to neglect their homework.

Each of these situations involves an element of motivation. From the perspective of the school psychologist, special educator, teacher, and administrator, they have a plan they believe will work, if only the adult or student would implement it. It’s as though they are at the mercy of happenstance and can do nothing but wait for the teacher, parent, or student to really want to change. In other words, often school professionals feel helpless to motivate others to actively engage in services.

A MODERN VIEW OF MOTIVATION

A modern view of motivation, however, flips these assumptions about how and why people change on their head. In the modern approach, motivation is not dichotomous (i.e., either people are motivated or they are not) but rather it is dynamic and evolving. At noon, a teacher may be very motivated to improve his classroom-management skills after a morning of referring four students to the office for serious behavior violations. By the end of the day, that same teacher may be exhausted and thinking little about ways to improve the classroom environment. Similarly, a parent may be motivated to be involved in school matters after her child is suspended. Within a few days, though, her sense of energy toward changing the situation may be replaced by concerns at work or meeting the daily needs of her family.

In this conceptualization, motivation resides in an interpersonal and ecological context rather than simply dwelling inside the person. The world around us influences and shapes our desire to change. On some level, we all know this. We know that certain pictures or images can evoke motivational responses from us; some people put pictures of a beach on their mirror to motivate their diet or exercise behaviors, whereas others put prompts or verbal messages in their kitchen to spark their interest in eating healthfully. We also know the way we talk about things with others can influence how motivated we are to change. Think of a teenager whose parents regularly nag him about doing well in school, but who routinely does the opposite. The types of conversations we have with people who are considering change can have a strong influence over whether their interest in changing waxes or wanes. In the modern view of motivation, the more these conversations draw out of the person the reasons for wanting to change and the benefits of possible changes, the more likely it is that the motivation will persist. However, the more these conversations encourage the person to defend the status quo, essentially arguing against change, the less likely it is that change will occur.
I. OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

WHAT IS MI?

MI represents this modern view of motivation. MI attempts to help people resolve their ambivalence about behavior change by highlighting discrepancies between their values and their behaviors. It is grounded in social psychology research and client-centered counseling principles. A basic tenet of this approach is that people are much more likely to do things that they say they will do versus things they are told to do. The role of the consultant is to ask questions that make it more likely that the teacher or parent will talk about change (change talk) rather than spending much time telling them what to do. Effective questions ask about problems with the status quo (“What makes you concerned about your classroom right now?”), advantages of changing (“How would your life be better if you reduced disruptive classroom behaviors?”), disadvantages of not changing (“If you don’t do anything, what might be some bad things that could happen?”), and intention to change (“How certain are you that you will follow through on this plan by next week?”). Conversely, arguing and telling the parent, student, or teacher the reasons they need to change generally has the opposite effect. A rule of thumb in this approach is if you hear yourself arguing for change, do something different. You want the parent, student, or teacher making that argument.

In a broader sense, MI approaches are also attentive to the well-established principles of effective brief interactions, denoted by the acronym FRAMES (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). These principles that can be useful in helping people become more motivated to change include the following: First, person-specific and individualized Feedback about their behavior can often be motivating to people. Daily-performance feedback toward a targeted goal is one example. For example, providing a teacher trying to increase his positive to negative ratio of interactions with information about the frequency of praise statements and reprimands that he uses based on direct observations can inspire continued improvement or satisfaction with progress. Second, leaving Responsibility for change with each individual is also important (“It’s ultimately up to you whether you want to do anything about this problem.”). Third, giving Advice selectively and only with permission can help people initiate the change process, especially when it is delivered within the context of a collaborative relationship. Fourth, if individuals express an interest in changing a behavior, providing them with a Menu of options can make it more likely that he or she will remain motivated (“There are several ways that other teachers have been successful in reducing disruptions. Let me tell you about a couple and you let me know which one sounds best to you.”). Fifth, expressing Empathy throughout these discussions is essential to promoting their likelihood of moving forward. Sixth, supporting people’s Self-efficacy, their belief that they can make the intended changes if they choose to do so, is another element of effective consultation. Two ways to do this are to note their current successes in changing (“How did you make that happen?”) and to ask about times in the past that they have successfully
managed challenging situations ("Tell me about the last time you had a disruptive class and how you were able to get control of it.").

CHECK-UPS

Some specific consultation models based on MI have been developed in recent years for application in schools. These models are extensions of the classic "check-up" strategies that emerged in substance-use counseling in the 1990s (e.g., the "Drinker Check-Up"). Check-Ups are motivational enhancement approaches that employ all of the MI-related strategies to deliver personalized feedback about particular areas of functioning. Dishion and Kavanagh (2003) developed the Family Check-Up (FCU) to provide a platform for brief assessment and tailored feedback to foster parent motivation to access and participate in services. The original model was intended for use in school settings as part of a comprehensive school-wide model for working with families. More recently, Reinke and colleagues (2011) developed the Classroom Check-Up (CCU) as a brief motivational enhancement intervention for consulting with teachers about classroom behavior management skills. Check-Ups provide a method for using MI within an explicit framework for working with teachers, families, and youth in schools. Both the FCU and CCU involve two to three session meetings, ecological assessments, personalized feedback, and action planning based on the feedback. Each assumes that the foundation for motivating consultees to change is a collaborative relationship and attention is paid to the well-established factors that promote motivation, including those emphasized in MI.

DOES IT WORK?

Aside from its intuitive appeal, the use of MI has blossomed during the past two decades in large part because of the vast evidence base that has been accumulated about it as a method for helping people change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The watershed moment occurred in the mid-1990s with the release of findings from the largest therapy study ever conducted, Project MATCH. MI was one of the three treatments in the study. As MI included far fewer sessions than the other two treatments, the study authors expected participants who received it to fare worse, except for those with less severe problems. In fact, they found those who received MI did as well as those in the other treatments, regardless of problem severity. Due to MI’s brevity, researchers, clinicians, and policymakers latched onto it as an innovative method. Since that time, research on MI has mushroomed with over 200 randomized trials now supporting its efficacy in a wide variety of settings (Miller & Rollnick, 2002, 2013). Moreover, MI has been extended to address a seemingly limitless array of problems in health care settings, the corrections system, and education. In one of its most novel applications, Thevos (2000) found that MI could be used to improve the likelihood of water purification practices in east African villages. The common thread of applications has been to any problem where compliance or adherence is an issue; in other words, virtually any situation that requires human change.
In education settings, several studies have now showed that MI-based interventions improve outcomes for parents, teachers, and students (see Reinke, Herman, & Sprick, 2011, 2010; Stormshak & Dishion, 2002; Strait et al., 2012). Furthermore, because it can be used alone or as a tool for connecting parents, teachers, and students to other evidence-based interventions, MI is a value-added method. Simply increasing participation in high-quality services (such as teacher or parent training programs) by fostering motivation to do so is a valued outcome in itself. Finally, the use of MI as a strategy for promoting everyday conversations about change is supported by the wealth of research on the importance of the helping relationship. Over 1,500 studies conducted during the past half century have repeatedly confirmed that the most important determinant of successful consultation or counseling interventions is the quality of the relationship between the consultant and the consultee (see Bergin & Garfield, 1994). It is one of the most consistent findings in research. The effect of the relationship quality on outcomes dwarfs the effects of other factors, including the model or type of approach (e.g., behaviorism, cognitive, psychodynamic). As you will see, the foundation of MI is a collaborative, respectful relationship in line with these findings.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK?

This book is intended to foster everyday conversations about change in schools. It is designed to provide practice guidelines for any school professional who attempts to build engagement in school-based supports and services. This includes any professional working on school-based support teams in which parent, student, or staff involvement is required for success. The goal is to provide a useful model for consultation that will lead to increased use of effective practices in schools.

Additionally, we aim to describe ways to connect these skills and strategies to other established behavior support and parenting programs such as the Incredible Years Series, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, First Step to Success, and programs in the Safe and Civil Schools Series. These strategies also can be used to combine motivational principles with academic and instructional programs.

Part I provides an overview of MI and related engagement strategies. Chapter 2 describes contextual strategies that promote willingness to attend meetings or engage in consultation discussions. As MI requires that people actually attend meetings or become willing to have conversations, Chapter 2 provides methods for successfully accessing consultees. Chapter 3 describes specific MI techniques that can be used across school contexts. We provide a summary of the evidence base underlying MI and then describe specific MI-related strategies. Additionally, this part provides details about the critical elements of effective feedback and support planning that may lead to increased engagement.

Part II describes applications of MI for specific targeted participants. Separate chapters describe using MI with parents, teachers, and students. Additionally, we provide a detailed description of the FCU as an example of a structured MI-based model that integrates parent, teacher, and student perspectives.
Additionally, Chapter 8 in Part II describes a model for using MI to support the activities of school-based problem-solving teams.

Part III discusses other aspects of implementation and dissemination. We describe efforts to integrate MI with other evidence-based practices and programs. We also describe methods for monitoring fidelity of implementation to ensure that the school staff implements MI strategies correctly.

This book is intended to produce five primary outcomes: (a) describe research-based strategies for building teacher, parent, and student engagement in school-based services; (b) identify consultation skills related to MI, providing objective feedback, and using data to tailor interventions to the specific needs of parents, teachers, and students; (c) illustrate in explicit detail effective consultation models based in MI for supporting teachers, parents, and students; (d) identify methods for infusing MI into other school-based intervention models; and (e) define procedures for building the capacity to implement MI within a school or across an entire district.

FOR WHOM IS THIS BOOK WRITTEN?

This book is written for educational personnel (school psychologists, consultants, special educators, behavior specialists, teachers, and others) who consult with individuals within the school, where motivation and engagement are important. The book also has value for administrators and school-based teams who have the task of designing effective behavior support systems and resources for students in their building or district.

We intend the book to be useful for two levels of MI skill development. First, this book is intended to help any school professional have more effective everyday conversations about change. The principles of MI apply in every interaction in which changing behavior is of interest. Ignoring these principles or acting counter to them increases the probability that school professionals will have unsatisfying conversations about change. However, attending to and adopting the principles of MI even in small ways is likely to positively shift the nature of these conversations. In this regard, any school professional can benefit from reading and applying the spirit of MI along with some of the strategies that align with it. Throughout the text, we have included pullout examples, called Everyday Conversations About Change, to illustrate the use of MI principles in very brief encounters that occur during a typical school day.

Second, many school professionals will already have a solid foundation in basic listening skills and effective consultation. For these professionals, the book is intended to sharpen their consultation skills, allowing them to target areas for further professional development. Some of these school professionals may want to invest more time in becoming fully fluent in an MI-consistent mode of consultation and to use it as a structured clinical technique. The detailed descriptions of the various Check-Up approaches provide a useful framework for applying...
a structured MI approach. Additionally, Chapter 11 describes further steps and additional resources in developing fluency in MI as a clinical technique.

A CAVEAT

After learning of our work with MI, a colleague encouraged us to write a book about how to motivate anyone to do anything. Although this would be useful (and likely a best seller!) it calls to mind a secretive, manipulative approach to world dominance. The methods described in this book are not a magical elixir nor are they intended to solve all problems. Rather, these methods are best used as part of a broader consultation relationship.

As we will repeat regularly throughout the book, MI strategies only work in the context of a supportive relationship. The foundation of MI work is referred to as the “spirit of MI” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Part of this spirit involves trusting that the people who you consult with will make the best decisions for themselves. Becoming overly attached to a single-minded goal (e.g., getting a parent to attend school meetings) is counter to an MI approach and likely will undermine the relationship. Compassion is another critical aspect of the MI spirit, that is, an abiding concern about the welfare and interests of the person with whom you are consulting. This aspect of MI is what distinguishes it from self-interested socially manipulative practices such as those found in sales and advertising.

Aside from the specific techniques of MI, there are foundational qualities and skills that are prerequisites for effective consultation. As noted above, one finding repeatedly observed in the helping literature is that the strongest predictor of whether consultation will be helpful is the quality of the relationship rather than specific methods and models. Not surprisingly, the attitudes, personal qualities, and style of the consultant play a major role in whether helping alliances form. The same is true in virtually any successful consultation relationship, be it counseling and supporting families, consulting with teachers, or guiding students. Thus, a key place to start with any consultation model is awareness of these relationship-building qualities.

We discuss how these qualities facilitate effective consultation in greater detail throughout the book. We conceptualize these factors in a hierarchical manner with some serving as the foundation for increasingly complex skills.

MI PLUS WHAT?

A final important point is that although MI in itself is a great approach to help people move forward with plans to change, it may not be enough. For many people, this gentle push may evoke significant behavior changes. Keep in mind, however, that many people will also need help in making the desired change. In other words, motivation and intention to change are only one part of the
equation, albeit a very important part. The other part involves the skills needed to make the change happen. A consultant may be effective in using MI to get a teacher to want to improve her instructional pacing, but the teacher may not know how to do it. Thus, another part of being an effective consultant is knowing how to help people produce the changes they want to see. Understanding the theory and research behind how best to help people make changes once they have decided to do so is a necessity for a well-rounded consultant. The behavior technology knowledge base is comprehensive and beyond the scope of this book. However, there are many resources that can be helpful to a consultant and even to a parent or teacher if they prefer to work on developing the skills alone. These additional resources will be listed throughout the book for each topical area.