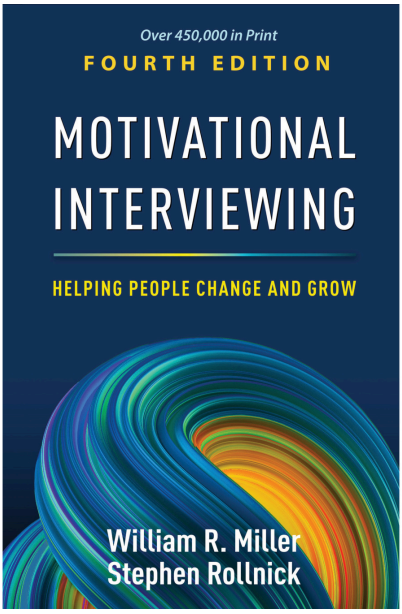


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MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

FOURTH EDITION

HELPING PEOPLE CHANGE AND GROW

William R. Miller
Stephen Rollnick



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To my beloved spouse of 50 years,
Kathleen Jackson

—WRM

Looking to the next generation:
for the wonderful and loving Jacob, Stefan,
Maya, and Nathan Rollnick

—SR

About the Authors

William R. Miller, PhD, is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of New Mexico. He introduced motivational interviewing (MI) in a 1983 article and in the first edition of *Motivational Interviewing* (1991), coauthored with Stephen Rollnick. Dr. Miller's research has focused particularly on the treatment and prevention of addictions and more broadly on the psychology of change. He is a recipient of two career achievement awards from the American Psychological Association, the international Jellinek Memorial Award, and an Innovators Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among many other honors. His publications include 65 books and over 400 articles and chapters. His website is *https://williamrmiller.net*.

Stephen Rollnick, PhD, is Honorary Distinguished Professor in the School of Medicine at Cardiff University, Wales, United Kingdom. He is cofounder of MI, with a career in clinical psychology and academia that focused on how to improve conversations about change, and helped to create the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (*http://motivationalinterviewing.org*). He has worked in diverse fields, with special interests in mental health and long-term health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS. Dr. Rollnick has published widely in scientific journals and has written many books on helping people to change behavior. He has traveled worldwide to train practitioners in many settings and cultures, and he now works as a trainer and consultant in health care and sports. His website is *www.stephenrollnick.com*.

Preface to the Fourth Edition

As we finish writing this fourth edition of *Motivational Interviewing,* we have each devoted half a century to understanding how and why people change and how to help them do so. For each edition, including this one, we have almost completely rewritten the book, benefiting from what has been learned in the decade since the prior edition.

Psychological methods tend over time to become ever more technical and complex. The textbooks grow larger. Practitioners and instructors seek advanced training and certificates of proficiency in the brand-name method, which in turn can lead toward restricting practice to those so qualified. There are some understandable reasons for this progression, and early in the development of motivational interviewing (MI) we were advised by respected colleagues to trademark and copyright the name and to license its practice: "You'll be sorry if you don't."

We declined to do so, and MI has followed a very different course. Our conscious reason was our disinclination to become MI police, occupied with preventing bad practice, if indeed that is even possible. Instead we and the MI Network of Trainers (*http://motivationalinterviewing.org*) have chosen to focus on understanding and promoting better practice, freely sharing what we have learned along the way. MI is like open-source software, available for those who want to learn and practice it, which may be one reason for the surprisingly rapid and wide dissemination of MI. Still, many ideas that are freely available do not spread so readily. There seems to be something more to why MI has been adopted across so many different settings, professions, cultures, and languages and why it has been applied to such a wide range of change challenges. It is as though helpers seem to *recognize* MI when they meet it, like something they had already known. It

is not a totally new or strange approach. To some it feels more like a friend they had known long ago and perhaps lost touch with for a while.

Writing this fourth edition has posed many interesting challenges for us. For readers new to the method, this book serves as their introduction to MI. Some have heard of MI, perhaps learned a bit about it in presentations or readings, and are interested in understanding how to practice it. At the same time, this has also been the authoritative book on MI to which people turn for scientific documentation and a more advanced understanding. Some readers are teachers and trainers who help others to develop skillfulness. How could we write for all these audiences?

The first three editions of *Motivational Interviewing* did grow in size and complexity. Each time, hundreds of new studies had appeared to clarify the promise, processes, and limitations of MI. We could now write a still larger and more complicated fourth edition, but we are drawn instead toward simplicity. When understanding something more deeply, it may become possible to explain it more clearly and with less jargon. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. opined: "I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity." In this fourth edition we pursue the challenge of conveying simplicity on the far side of complexity in hopes that what we have learned over the decades may be of use to a still broader range of professional helpers.

MI is certainly being applied now in areas far beyond our initial imagining. It is used not only in counseling and psychotherapy but also in health care, education, nutrition, coaching, preventive dentistry, sports, social work, corrections, leadership, and management. Note that this includes some professional roles that are less about effecting discrete behavior changes and more about accompanying people over a longer period of growth, roles such as teachers, mentors, parents, spiritual directors, supervisors, leaders, and life coaches. Already more than a hundred books have been published on particular applications of MI. Thus, we are writing for an ever-broader range of helping professions. People in many such roles have the common experience that attempting to push (coax, cajole, coerce, persuade) someone into changing often fails or even backfires. Trying out the spirit and method of MI can yield observable change in how people respond, improve their outcomes, and even make work more enjoyable for practitioners and clients alike. MI is a way of practicing a helping profession. If you are relatively new to this method, we hope that this edition affords you a clear introduction and welcome to MI. If your practice of MI is more seasoned, we aim to deepen your understanding of how all this applies in your own work.

Addressing a broader array of professional fields creates some special challenges in language. Terminology varies across these fields, but the essentials of MI remain the same. Those essentials are our focus in this

fourth edition—the fundamentals of this method that apply in helping relationships. People who are being helped may be called *clients, patients, relatives, students, athletes, advisees, residents,* or *employees*; we have used *client* or *person* as a generic term, and we hope that works for you. The practitioners of MI come from many different professions and fields, and we have written simply to "you" as the reader. To avoid sexist language, we have used plural pronouns when referring to people in general.

We are conscious, too, that many readers of this edition are specialists in behavioral health fields—practitioners, counselors, and psychotherapists who treat psychological problems. For this reason, we have included a new feature, special "For Therapists" sections that offer more advanced material within the context and terminology of psychotherapy. Using these sections allows us to fill in some specialist pieces without assuming that all readers will be interested in treatment issues or will be familiar with psychotherapy jargon.

For those already familiar with MI, we have introduced some changes from prior editions. Writing for helpers more broadly, we have sought to move away from specialist jargon toward more everyday language. Whereas early editions focused on *preparing* people for change, we now understand MI as a way of accompanying people throughout the journey of change and growth. Within the spirit of MI we have retained the constructs of partnership, acceptance, and compassion, but we have broadened "evocation" to "empowerment," affirming clients' own strengths, motivations, resourcefulness, and autonomy. We describe the four processes of MI (engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning) more simply as component "tasks" of MI. Informed by ongoing discussions about praise versus affirmation, we adopted the distinction between simple and complex affirmations introduced by Miller and Moyers in their 2021 book, *Effective Psychotherapists*. Our prior term, *righting reflex,* has been changed to the clearer *fixing reflex*. A technical procedure that we had inaptly termed *running head start* is now called a *pendulum* technique. We give greater attention to the strategic use of *directional* questions and reflections that are chosen intentionally to invite and strengthen change talk. With increased remote delivery of services via telephone and digital technology, this edition addresses issues in providing MI beyond in-person contexts.

Documentation in this book remains thorough, but we have switched away from an American Psychological Association citation format that interrupts text with names and dates. Instead, citations and additional information are provided in numbered endnotes within each chapter. Some of the illustrations of MI dialogue in this edition are from transcription of video demonstration interviews by highly experienced practitioners. We have also added a "Personal Perspective" feature in each chapter with one of us (Bill or Steve) commenting on a particular aspect of MI practice. Throughout this edition, we highlight some terms and phrases that merit

special attention or have particular meaning within MI. The first time they are discussed in the book they are printed in ***boldface italic*** font, and they are also listed in alphabetical order at the end of the chapter. A definition of each of these concepts is included in the updated glossary at the end of the book. You will encounter some intentional repetition from chapter to chapter of points that we regard as particularly important.

As we provided with the third edition, a website with additional resources for learning and teaching MI is available at *www.guilford.com/miller2-materials*.

Despite all the changes we have made in this edition, the method of MI itself remains the same. We just know far more about it than when we first described it. Although there can be a freestanding "pure" version of MI as an intervention in itself, most often it is now being used in combination with other evidence-based methods. Rather than an add-on technique, MI is becoming a way of doing what else you already do as a helping professional, a way of being with those you serve. It is meant not to replace but to enhance what you do. The fundamentals of MI overlap substantially with what makes helpers more helpful. Our hope for this fourth edition, then, is that you will find in it a welcome way of being a guide for those who seek your help on their journey toward change and growth.

Acknowledgments

We first acknowledge our indebtedness to Carl Ransom Rogers (1902–1987), founder of a humane, person-centered approach to counseling, psychotherapy, education, and clinical science. MI is a person-centered method built on the solid foundation of the work provided by Dr. Rogers and his students.

We are grateful to the remarkable community of colleagues known as MINT—the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers—for stimulating discussions that have informed us over the years as we developed successive editions of *Motivational Interviewing*. Professor Theresa Moyers has been at the forefront of MI process and training research, advancing our understanding of how MI works by applying scientific method while also clearly recognizing its limitations. The MINT members who asked us good questions and contributed their knowledge and perspectives to this fourth edition are far too numerous to name here. We tried, and we were quickly overwhelmed just by the long list of people we recalled, plus troubled that we would surely be omitting important others.

This is the 19th book, including new editions, that we have personally authored or edited with The Guilford Press, in addition to serving as series editors for other Guilford books on MI. Having worked with many other publishers, we continue to be impressed with and grateful for the outstanding level of care, quality editing, and attention to detail that has been our consistent experience with Guilford. It has been a great pleasure over the years to work with Guilford editors like Jim Nageotte, Jane Keislar, Kitty Moore, and Chris Benton—not necessarily when we are in the midst of yet another rewrite, but always in the quality of the final product. As before, the copy editor for this book, Betty Pessagno, was most helpful in getting the language just right. Finally, we are grateful to Theresa Moyers, David Rosengren, and Allan Zuckoff for their careful reviews of the manuscript, offering suggestions to improve its flow and clarity. Like MI itself, this book is the collective work of many dedicated, generous, and talented people.