

Motivational Interviewing: Reflections

A key to successfully motivational interviewing—a skill required to help people with risky substance use to change their behavior—is to master its “reflections” component. Here are some guidelines:

- It’s THE Go-To Skill! If you’re not doing reflections, you are not doing MI
- To be a mirror, reflect on what the speaker said by *repeating* and/or *summarizing* what you have heard
- Non-verbal communication is attentive, open and non-judgmental
- Every reflection opens a possibility: when listening to the speaker, you may *correct, verify, add, refine*.

Stems:

It sounds like....

So, you are saying...

You are wondering if....

I hear you saying...

You are...

Levels of Reflection

1. Repeating. The simplest reflection repeats an element of what the speaker has said.
2. Rephrasing. Here the listener stays close to what the speaker said, but substitutes synonyms or slightly rephrases what was offered.
3. Paraphrasing. This is a more major restatement in which the listener infers the meaning in what was said and reflects this back in new words. This adds to and extends what was actually said.
4. Reflection of feeling. Often regarded as the deepest form of reflection, this is a paraphrase that emphasizes the emotional dimension through feeling statements, metaphor, etc.

