

WEBINAR: What is motivational interviewing and how can it be used in brief consultations with PH patients?
Episode 7 – Wednesday 5 December

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Overview

On Wednesday 5 December 2018, Actelion hosted a webinar entitled 'What is motivational interviewing and how can it be used in brief consultations with PH patients?' Damian Edwards, Senior Cognitive Behavioral Trainer, introduced the concept of motivational interviewing and discussed a number of techniques under this umbrella term that can be applied in consultations with PH patients.

The primary objectives of the webinar were:

- To increase understanding of the term 'motivational interviewing' and the various types
- To recognize the value and range of motivational techniques available to support patient 'activation' and self-management of long-term conditions
- To share an overview of best practice motivational techniques that can be incorporated into brief consultations with people living with PH
- To discuss other behaviour change techniques that have been or can be used effectively in a PH setting

Discussion summary and key learnings

Motivational interviewing: an overview

- There are different types of motivation and it's important to define what motivation means to the individual to support patients in adopting good health behaviors (e.g. practising exercise, adhering to medication, regularly being weighed to spot edema)
 - The term 'motivational interviewing' (sometimes referred to as motivational support) is a general term which defines any kind of counselling interview technique that encourages motivation in a patient (see examples at the end of this document)
 - This is not to be confused with the technique Motivational Interviewing, with a capital 'M' and a capital 'I'. This is a specific counselling style for eliciting behavior change by helping individuals explore and resolve ambivalence, a state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone
 - The challenge of motivational interviewing is that the psychology behind its function is incredibly unique to the individual and therefore, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach
 - The more tailored an approach is (asking relevant open questions; demonstrating listening, empathy; setting achievable, personalized goals, etc.), the more successful and sustainable the intervention will be
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Using the principles of motivational interviewing in PH patient consultations

Adopting an individual approach

- This is essential in order for motivational interviewing techniques to result in the desired patient response. Start by identifying a target behavior that would benefit the patient's health (e.g. taking up exercise in line with PH treatment guidelines). Discuss the link between that behavior and positive health benefits, as well as critically, the patient's perception of the relevance to their own circumstances. Avoid being judgmental and empathize with the patient's motivations, feelings and beliefs, as well as encourage them to consider the benefits of change in their own words

Be aware that some patients may not want to be counselled

- It is ultimately their choice and it is good to acknowledge this and that it might change in future e.g. "I get the sense that you are not ready to address this at this time. We can discuss this at a future appointment if you change your mind."

Open questions are essential to identify patient goals and motivations

- This will ensure that any suggested course of action is relevant and will most likely to lead to real change. Example questions to explore with your PH patients include:
 - Tell me a bit about your PH and how things have been going over the past few months since I last saw you?
 - What is important to you as you think about the future?
 - What are your hopes or personal goals as your condition progresses?
 - What aspects of self-management are acceptable to you? What are less so?

Adjusting support techniques

- Some patients might not want to comply with a particular therapy or any therapy at all. In those instances, it is recommended that we directly ask patients 'what will motivate you to take care of yourself in this situation?'

Framing information and guidance with positive language

- This helps the patient to feel supported and encouraged rather than negative language which can make an individual feel disheartened
 - e.g. rather than "If you don't actively self-manage your symptoms may become more severe" try focusing on the positive
 - e.g. "If you do actively self-manage more you may notice an improvement in your energy levels and mental health"
- Patients who take ownership of setting their healthcare goals are more likely to focus on achieving these compared to patients who don't take on this responsibility. If needed, clinicians can position goal setting as a joint patient-clinician activity to ensure patients put effort in to developing these objectives themselves rather than just being set by the clinician

Avoid setting goals that are too ambitious

- These can be unhelpful and even cause patients to lose confidence in their ability to self-manage. If a goal seems too challenging the healthcare professional should sit down with the patient and consider how it can be simplified. Discuss potential barriers to achieving the goals and how the patient plans to address them, as well as acknowledging that it's not a straightforward path to achieving real change and slip ups are common – this does not mean they have failed
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- Encourage dialogue between yourself and your patients and ask for feedback on which motivational techniques they prefer. Consider their verbal but also their non-verbal feedback (body language, facial expressions etc.) in order to establish which methods they prefer. If the patient appears to be uncomfortable, ask further questions to understand their concerns e.g. 'You seem to be agreeing with this but your body language suggests that you might be uncomfortable with this approach, is that right?'

Sustainability of change

- It's important to remember that not adhering to change is a natural human phenomenon. Remember to reinforce good behavior whenever appropriate to ensure all efforts from the patient are being acknowledged and praised

Conclusion

- The key to effective motivational support is considering a patient's individuality and the factors that might affect the ways in which they respond to different techniques
- There are a number of different techniques which can be used in consultations to provide motivational support but its success depends on both the patient and clinician working together

Appendix: motivational interviewing approaches

- Examples of established, well-evidenced motivational interviewing techniques include:
 - **Cognitive Tools (CT):** CT is a conversational therapy which involves encouraging a patient to interpret their thoughts in a different way
 - **Behavioral Tools (BT):** BT Behavior therapy is a broad term referring to clinical psychotherapy that uses techniques derived from behaviorism which looks at specific, learned behaviors and how the environment influences those behaviors
 - **Motivational Interviewing (MI):** MI (with a capital 'M' and a capital 'I') is a directive, patient-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping patients to explore and resolve ambivalence
 - **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** CBT is based on the concept that thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and actions are interconnected, and that negative thoughts and feelings can trap you in a vicious cycle.

For more information on motivational interviewing and further techniques, please refer to the following webpages:

- <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/supporting-behaviour-change/motivational-interviewing>
- <https://learning.bmj.com/learning/module-intro/motivational-interviewing.html?moduleId=10051582>