

Supplementary Box 1. Characteristics of the motivational interviewing.²

- ▶ Motivation to change is elicited from the client, and not imposed from without. Other motivational approaches have emphasised coercion, persuasion, constructive confrontation. Such strategies may have their place in evoking change, but they are quite different in spirit from motivational interviewing which relies upon identifying and mobilising the client's intrinsic values and goals to stimulate behaviour change.
- ▶ Ambivalence takes the form of a conflict between two courses of action (e.g., indulgence versus restraint), each of which has perceived benefits and costs associated with it. The counsellor's task is to facilitate expression of both sides of the ambivalence impasse, and guide the client toward an acceptable resolution that triggers change. The specific strategies of motivational interviewing are designed to elicit, clarify, and resolve ambivalence in a client-centred and respectful counselling atmosphere.
- ▶ The counselling style is generally a quiet and eliciting one. More aggressive strategies, sometimes guided by a desire to 'confront client denial,' easily slip into pushing clients to make changes for which they are not ready, and therefore will not accommodate afterwards.
- ▶ Readiness to change is not a client trait, but a fluctuating product of interpersonal interaction. Resistance and 'denial' are seen not as client traits, but as feedback regarding counsellor behaviour. Client resistance is often a signal that the counsellor is assuming greater readiness to change than is the case, and it is a cue that the counsellor needs to modify motivational strategies.
- ▶ Eliciting and reinforcing the clients in their motivational behaviour towards problem recognition, concerns, desire, intention, responsibility and ability to change. The client's belief in ability to carry out and succeed achieving a specific goal is essential.
- ▶ The therapeutic relationship is more like a partnership or companionship than expert/recipient roles. The counsellor respects the client's autonomy and freedom of choice and consequences regarding his or her own behaviour.
- ▶ Motivational interviewing is not merely a set of techniques that are applied in treatment of clients. It is an interpersonal style, not restricted to formal counselling settings. It is a subtle balance of directive and client-centred components shaped by a guiding philosophy and understanding of what triggers change.