



PHASE 2 — DEVELOPMENT

Week 16 of 36

Motivational Interviewing Basics

Sessions 46–48

Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday

FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth & Empowerment

Dooly State Prison

FORGE Curriculum

Phase 2: Development — "Build Others"

Week 16: Motivational Interviewing Basics

Week 16 Overview

Purpose: Equip participants with the foundational skills of Motivational Interviewing (MI) — the evidence-based approach to helping people find their own motivation for change. By the end of this week, every participant should understand the spirit of MI, be able to use OARS skills in a mentoring conversation, and apply MI techniques to realistic FORGE scenarios.

Context: Participants have completed Phase 1 (self-work) and Weeks 13-15 (mentor identity, teaching skills, facilitation practice). They know who they are and they know how to teach. Now they learn how to meet someone where they are — especially someone who doesn't want to be met.

Sessions This Week: - Session 46 (Tuesday): The Spirit of MI - Session 47 (Wednesday): MI Skills for Mentors - Session 48 (Thursday): MI in FORGE Context

Materials Needed: - FORGE Handbooks (participants should have these already) - MI Quick Reference cards (1 per participant — see Appendix B of Program Design) - Stages of Change handout (1 per participant) - Readiness Ruler handout (1 per participant) - Journals/notebooks - Easel paper or whiteboard (if available) - Scenario cards for exercises (facilitator prepares — templates provided below)

SESSION 46: The Spirit of MI

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 46 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain the four principles of MI (partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation) in their own words 2. Describe why "rolling with resistance" works better than confrontation 3. Distinguish between change talk and sustain talk in a conversation 4. Identify the five stages of change and recognize which stage a person is in 5. Explain why pushing someone to change before they're ready usually backfires

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Set up: Chairs in circle. No tables if possible.

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. Two things: How are you doing today? And this question — think about it before you answer: Has anyone ever tried to change your mind about something by arguing with you? What happened?"

Send the talking piece. Let people share. Most will describe the same thing: they dug in harder. That's the setup for everything today.

Facilitator (after the round):

"Notice what almost everyone just said. When someone pushed, you pushed back. When someone argued, you argued harder. When someone told you what to do, part of you wanted to do the opposite — even if they were right. Hold onto that. That's the starting point for everything we're going to learn this week."

Review and Reflection (10 minutes)

Purpose: Connect to Weeks 13-15 and bridge to MI.

Facilitator:

"Over the last three weeks, you've learned what a mentor is, how to set boundaries, how adults learn, how to facilitate instead of lecture, and how to plan and deliver a lesson. You've practiced teaching in front of this group. Some of you were nervous. Some of you surprised yourselves.

But here's the gap we haven't filled yet: What do you do when the person you're trying to help doesn't want help? What do you do when your mentee is sitting across from you with his arms folded saying, 'I don't need this program'? What do you do when a dorm member is heading straight for a bad decision and you can see it coming, but he can't — or won't?

That's what Motivational Interviewing is for."

Instruction: What Is Motivational Interviewing? (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Motivational Interviewing — MI — was developed in the 1980s by two psychologists named William Miller and Stephen Rollnick. It started in addiction treatment, but it's been used in healthcare, corrections, education, and mentoring programs all over the world. The research behind it is massive — hundreds of studies showing that it works.

*Here's the one-sentence version: **MI is a way of talking with people that helps them find their own reasons for change.***

Not your reasons. Their reasons. That's the whole game.

Let me tell you why this matters in here. You're going to be mentoring men who live in the same environment you do. They face the same pressures. They deal with the same frustrations. Some of them are doing things that are going to hurt them — gambling, fighting, running their mouths, refusing to engage in anything productive. You can see it. They can't — or they can, but they're not ready to do anything about it.

*Your instinct is going to be to tell them what to do. 'Stop gambling.' 'You need to get in this program.' 'You're messing up your life.' And that instinct comes from a good place — you care. But here's what MI teaches us: **telling someone to change almost never produces change. Helping them talk themselves into change does.**"*

Pause. Let it land.

"MI is not a trick. It's not manipulation. It's not reverse psychology. It's a genuine, respectful way of being with another person that honors their ability to make their own decisions — while gently helping them see what those decisions are actually costing them."

The Four Principles of MI (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"MI is built on four principles. Think of these as the spirit behind the technique. If you get the techniques right but the spirit wrong, it doesn't work. People can smell manipulation. These principles have to be real."

Write each principle where everyone can see it, or read each one twice.

1. Partnership

"MI is not something you do TO someone. It's something you do WITH them. You're not the expert on their life — they are. You're walking alongside them, not dragging them forward. In a corrections environment, people get told what to do all day long. COs tell them. The system tells them. Everyone tells them. A mentor who comes in and starts telling them what to do is just another voice in that chorus. Partnership means: I'm here with you, not above you."

2. Acceptance

"Acceptance doesn't mean you approve of everything they're doing. It means you accept them as a whole human being with the right to make their own choices — even bad ones. It means you believe they have worth, even when their behavior doesn't reflect it. This is hard. When your mentee is doing something destructive, every part of you wants to shake him. Acceptance means you resist that urge. You see the person, not just the behavior."

3. Compassion

"Compassion means your mentee's well-being comes first. Not your ego. Not your desire to be right. Not your frustration. His well-being. When you're in a mentoring conversation, the question in the back of your mind should always be: 'Is what I'm about to say for his benefit or mine?' If it's for yours — to prove a point, to feel smart, to win the argument — don't say it."

4. Evocation

"This is the one most people miss. Evocation means the motivation for change is already inside the person — your job is to draw it out. You're not pouring something into an empty cup. You're helping them see what's already there. Every person in this facility has something they care about — their kids, their future, their reputation, their self-respect. Your job is to find that thing and connect it to the change they need to make."

Check for understanding:

"In your own words — what's the difference between a mentor who uses MI and a mentor who just gives advice? Someone tell me."

Let 2-3 people respond. Guide toward: MI draws out the person's own motivation; advice-giving imposes the mentor's motivation.

Rolling with Resistance (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let's go back to what we talked about in the opening. When someone pushes, you push back. In MI, that push-back is called 'resistance' — and the technique for handling it is called 'rolling with resistance.'

Imagine this: A man in your dorm says, 'I don't need any program. Programs don't work. I've been in three programs and nothing changed.'

Here's what most people do — they argue: 'But this program is different.' 'You just didn't try hard enough.' 'You need to give it a chance.'

What happens? He digs in deeper. Now he's defending his position AND annoyed at you.

Rolling with resistance means you don't fight it. You acknowledge it. You move alongside it. Watch:"

Demonstrate:

"He says: 'Programs don't work. I've been in three and nothing changed.'

Rolling with resistance: 'You've been through three programs and none of them made a difference. That's frustrating. What would it take for something to actually work for you?'

Notice what I did. I didn't argue. I didn't defend FORGE. I validated his experience. And then I asked a question that invites HIM to think about what change would look like. I took his resistance and turned it into a conversation."

Another example:

"He says: 'I'm fine. I don't need to change anything.'

Wrong response: 'Come on, man, look at where you are.'

Rolling with resistance: 'You feel like things are working for you right now. Tell me about that — what's going well?'

See what happens? Either he starts talking about what's going well — and you can explore whether it's really going as well as he thinks — or he pauses, because the honest answer is that things aren't going that well. Either way, the conversation keeps moving without a fight."

*"The principle behind rolling with resistance is simple: **you cannot argue someone into wanting to change.** You can only create the space where they discover they want to change."*

Change Talk vs. Sustain Talk (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"When you're having a conversation with someone about change, they're going to say two kinds of things. Learning to hear the difference is one of the most important MI skills.

Change talk is anything that moves toward change. Listen for these:

- **Desire:** *'I wish things were different.' 'I want to be a better father.'*
- **Ability:** *'I could probably do it if I tried.' 'I've done it before.'*
- **Reason:** *'If I keep going this way, I'm going to lose everything.' 'My kids deserve better.'*
- **Need:** *'I have to do something.' 'Something's got to give.'*
- **Commitment:** *'I'm going to make a change.' 'I'm done living like this.'*

When you hear change talk, your job is to reinforce it. Reflect it back. Ask more about it. 'Tell me more about wanting to be a better father. What would that look like?'

Sustain talk is anything that keeps things the same:

- *'I can't change.' 'It's too late.' 'This is just who I am.' 'It's not that bad.' 'Everyone does it.'*

When you hear sustain talk, don't argue with it. Acknowledge it and gently redirect: 'It sounds like part of you feels like it's too late. Is there another part that's not so sure?'

The most honest conversations contain both. A man sitting across from you might say, 'I want to change, but I don't know if I can.' Both of those are real. Your job is to amplify the change talk without dismissing the sustain talk."

The Stages of Change (15 minutes)

Distribute Stages of Change handout or write on board.

Facilitator:

"People don't go from 'I'm fine' to 'I'm going to change my entire life' in one conversation. Change happens in stages. If you try to push someone from stage 1 to stage 5 in one sitting, you'll lose them. Understanding where someone is tells you what kind of support they need."

Walk through each stage with a prison-specific example:

1. Precontemplation — 'I don't have a problem.'

"This is the man who genuinely doesn't think anything needs to change. He's not in denial — from his perspective, things are fine. Or maybe he knows there's a problem but he has zero intention of doing anything about it.

Example: The guy who gambles every night and says, 'Everybody does it. It's just how we pass time.' He doesn't see gambling as a problem.

What he needs from you: Not a lecture. Not pressure. Just a relationship. Be present. Be consistent. Plant a small seed and walk away. 'I hear you. I'm around if you ever want to talk about it.'"

2. Contemplation — 'Maybe I have a problem, but...'

"This person is thinking about change but hasn't committed. He's weighing the pros and cons. He might go back and forth in the same conversation.

Example: 'I know I should stop gambling, but it's the only thing that makes the time go by. And honestly, I'm not even sure I could stop if I wanted to.'

What he needs from you: Help him explore the pros and cons himself. Don't rush him. Ask questions like, 'What would be different if you stopped?' and 'What worries you about stopping?'"

3. Preparation — 'I'm going to do something about this.'

"He's decided to change and he's making a plan. This is fragile — he can slip back to contemplation easily.

Example: 'I'm going to stop gambling starting next week. I just need to settle one more debt first.'

What he needs from you: Help him make the plan concrete. 'What's your plan for when the guys start a game and invite you in? What are you going to do instead? Who's going to support you?'"

4. Action — 'I'm doing it.'

"He's actively making changes. This is where the work happens — and where it's hardest.

Example: He stopped gambling three weeks ago. He's finding other ways to spend his time. But he's bored, he's irritable, and the guys keep asking him to play.

What he needs from you: Encouragement. Affirmation of his effort. Help troubleshooting obstacles. 'Three weeks. That took real discipline. What's been the hardest part?'"

5. Maintenance — 'I'm keeping it going.'

"The change has stuck. He's built new habits. But he's not out of the woods — relapse is always possible, especially under stress.

Example: He hasn't gambled in four months. He's started reading in the evenings instead. But he just got bad news from home and he's tempted.

What he needs from you: Reminders of how far he's come. 'Four months, man. Remember where you were? You built that. One bad night doesn't erase four months of discipline.'"

Exercise (10 min):

Facilitator:

"I'm going to read five short scenarios. For each one, tell me: What stage of change is this person in? Write your answer in your journal, then we'll discuss."

Scenario 1: "A dorm member says, 'I don't know why you keep talking to me about anger management. I don't have an anger problem. Other people have a problem with me.'" (*Answer: Precontemplation*)

Scenario 2: "A mentee says, 'I know I need to stop hanging around those guys. Every time I do, I end up in trouble. But they're the only people who have my back in here.'" (*Answer: Contemplation*)

Scenario 3: "A FORGE participant says, 'I talked to my cellie and told him I'm going to start doing my thinking reports every night. He thinks I'm crazy but I don't care.'" (*Answer: Preparation*)

Scenario 4: "A mentee who used to get into fights weekly hasn't had a confrontation in six weeks. He's been using the STOP technique. He says, 'It's hard, but it's working.'" (*Answer: Action*)

Scenario 5: "A senior dorm member has been conflict-free for eight months. Other men come to him for advice. He runs an informal check-in circle every Sunday." (*Answer: Maintenance*)

Debrief (5 min): Discuss answers. Emphasize that the stage tells you what kind of support to provide — and more importantly, what NOT to do.

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round. One sentence: **What's one thing from today that changes how you'd approach a conversation with someone who doesn't want to change?**"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Tomorrow we get into the specific skills — OARS. These are the tools that make MI work in real time. Tonight, I want you to do one thing: **have a conversation with someone in the dorm where you practice rolling with resistance.** Don't announce it. Don't say, 'I'm practicing MI on you.' Just listen. When they say something you disagree with, try acknowledging it instead of arguing. See what happens. Journal about it tonight.

See you tomorrow."

Session 46 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed — "Has anyone tried to change your mind by arguing?"
- Connection made from Weeks 13-15 to MI

- MI defined and explained — "helping people find their own reasons for change"
- Four principles taught: partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation
- Rolling with resistance explained with examples
- Change talk vs. sustain talk defined with examples
- Five stages of change taught with prison-specific examples
- Stage identification exercise completed (5 scenarios)
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (practice rolling with resistance + journal)

SESSION 47: MI Skills for Mentors

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 47 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Use the four OARS skills: Open questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Summaries 2. Distinguish between open and closed questions and explain why open questions matter 3. Deliver specific, genuine, effort-focused affirmations 4. Demonstrate simple and complex reflections 5. Deliver a summary that captures the essence of what someone has shared

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. How are you doing? And: **Did you try rolling with resistance in a conversation last night? What happened?**"*

Send the talking piece. Listen for stories — some will have tried it, some won't. For those who did, ask briefly: "How did the other person respond?" Most will report that the conversation went differently than usual. That's the hook.

Review and Bridge (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Yesterday we learned the spirit of MI — the why. Partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation. Today we learn the how. There are four core skills in MI, and they're easy to remember because they spell OARS. Think of a rowboat. You're not dragging someone to shore. You're rowing alongside them. OARS are your tools."

Distribute MI Quick Reference cards (from Program Design Appendix B) if available, or write OARS on the board.

OARS Skill 1: Open Questions (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The first tool is **Open Questions**. Let me show you the difference between an open question and a closed question.

Closed question: 'Are you okay?' Open question: 'What's going on with you today?'

Closed question: 'Did you get in a fight?' Open question: 'Tell me what happened.'

Closed question: 'Do you want to stay in FORGE?' Open question: 'What's your experience been like in FORGE so far?'

See the difference? A closed question gets a one-word answer — yes, no, fine. A door shuts. An open question invites someone to talk. A door opens."

"Here's the rule of thumb: If someone can answer with one word, it's a closed question. If they have to actually think and explain, it's open.

Why does this matter? Because change talk lives in the details. If you ask a closed question, you'll never hear it. If you ask an open question, people start talking — and in the talking, they often discover what they actually think and feel.

Now — open questions don't mean vague questions. 'How's life?' is open but useless. Good open questions are specific and purposeful:

- 'What concerns you about the path you're on right now?'
- 'What would you want your life to look like when you leave here?'
- 'What's the hardest part about making that change?'
- 'What would it take for you to feel ready?'

Each of those opens a door that leads somewhere."

Practice (8 min):

"Pair up. I'm going to give you five closed questions. Your job is to rewrite each one as an open question. Work together. Write them in your journals."

Closed questions to convert: 1. "Are you angry?" → (e.g., "What are you feeling right now?") 2. "Do you want to change?" → (e.g., "What would change look like for you?") 3. "Is the program helping?" → (e.g., "What impact has the program had on you?") 4. "Did you think before you acted?" → (e.g., "Walk me through what was going

through your mind.") 5. "Are you going to do it again?" → (e.g., "What's your plan for next time you're in that situation?")

Share out (5 min): Each pair shares their best one. Facilitator highlights particularly strong examples and explains what makes them effective.

OARS Skill 2: Affirmations (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The second OARS skill is **Affirmations**. And I need to be clear about what this means, because most people get it wrong.

An affirmation is **NOT** flattery. It's not 'Good job, bro.' It's not vague praise. It's not something you say to make someone feel good.

An affirmation is a **specific, genuine statement that recognizes a person's strengths, effort, or values**. It notices what's right — especially when everything else feels wrong.

Here's the difference:

Flattery: 'You're doing great, man.' Affirmation: 'You walked away from that argument yesterday. That took discipline — especially because everyone was watching.'

Flattery: 'You're a good person.' Affirmation: 'You've been showing up to every session for six weeks, even after that setback with your family. That tells me you're committed to something bigger than the moment.'

Flattery: 'Keep it up.' Affirmation: 'I noticed you checked on Davis when he was having a rough day. Nobody asked you to do that. That's service.'

See the pattern? Good affirmations are **specific** — they name exactly what the person did. They're **genuine** — you actually mean it. And they're **effort-focused** — they recognize the choice and the work, not just the outcome."

"Why do affirmations matter? Because the men you'll mentor have spent most of their lives hearing what's wrong with them. From the system. From staff. From family. From themselves. A well-timed affirmation that's specific and honest can shift how a man sees himself. Not because you're blowing smoke — because you're showing him something real that he might not be able to see."

Three rules for FORGE affirmations:

"1. **Be specific.** Name the behavior you're affirming. 'You stayed calm when Johnson got in your face' — not 'You're so calm.'

1. **Be genuine.** If you don't mean it, don't say it. People in here have the best BS detectors in the world. A fake affirmation does more damage than no affirmation.

2. **Focus on effort and choice, not personality.** 'You chose to walk away' — not 'You're such a peaceful person.' Effort can be repeated. Personality labels are fragile."

Practice (10 min):

"Pair up. One of you is going to tell a short story — something you did in the last two weeks that took effort. The other person's job is to listen and then deliver an affirmation that's specific, genuine, and effort-focused. Then switch. I'm going to be walking around, and I want to hear real affirmations, not 'good job.'"

Debrief (3 min):

"How did it feel to receive a genuine affirmation? How did it feel to give one? For most of us, both are uncomfortable — because we're not used to it. That discomfort will fade. The impact won't."

OARS Skill 3: Reflections (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The third OARS skill is **Reflections**. This is the workhorse of MI. If you only master one skill, make it this one. A reflection is when you say back to someone what you heard them say — or what you heard beneath what they said. It tells the person: I'm listening. I hear you. You matter.

There are two types:"

Simple Reflection — Repeating or rephrasing what someone said.

"He says: 'I'm tired of being in trouble all the time.'

Simple reflection: 'You're exhausted from the constant cycle of getting in trouble.'

That's it. You're not adding anything. You're just proving you heard him. Simple reflections slow the conversation down and create safety."

Complex Reflection — Reflecting the meaning or emotion underneath what someone said.

"He says: 'I'm tired of being in trouble all the time.'

Complex reflection: 'Part of you is starting to wonder if there's a different way to live.'

See the difference? The complex reflection goes deeper. It names something he hasn't said out loud yet but is clearly feeling. A good complex reflection makes someone stop and say, 'Yeah... that's exactly it.'

Here's another example:

He says: 'My kids don't even know me. I've been locked up since my youngest was two.'

Simple reflection: 'You've been away from your kids for a long time.'

Complex reflection: 'Being separated from your kids is one of the heaviest things you carry. And it sounds like the thought of them not knowing you drives a lot of what you want to change.'

The complex reflection connects what he said to what he feels and what he wants. That's where change talk lives."

Common mistakes with reflections:

*"1. **Parroting.** Don't just repeat their exact words back to them like a recorder. Rephrase it. Show that you processed it, not just heard it.*

- 1. **Turning it into a question.** 'So you're tired of being in trouble?' — that question mark changes everything. It puts them on the defensive. Make it a statement. 'You're tired of being in trouble.' Period.*
- 2. **Adding judgment.** 'You're tired of being in trouble — well, yeah, you should be.' No. A reflection is clean. No opinions attached."*

Practice (10 min):

"Groups of three. Person A shares something they've been thinking about — something real, not a made-up scenario. Person B delivers a simple reflection. Person C delivers a complex reflection. Then rotate. Three rounds."

Debrief (3 min): Ask: "Which type of reflection had more impact — simple or complex? When would you use each one?" Guide toward: simple reflections build trust and slow things down; complex reflections deepen the conversation and surface change talk.

OARS Skill 4: Summaries (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The last OARS skill is **Summaries**. A summary is when you pull together everything someone has shared and reflect it back as a whole picture. It's like holding up a mirror to an entire conversation.

Summaries do three things:

1. They show the person you were really listening — not just to one thing they said, but to everything.
2. They help the person hear their own story organized and clear.
3. They create a natural transition — either to a deeper conversation or to a close.

Here's what a summary sounds like:

'So let me see if I've got this right. You came into FORGE because your cellie told you about it, and at first you weren't sure it was for you. Over the past few weeks, you've started to see some changes in how you handle conflict, and that feels good. But you're also struggling because some of the guys in your dorm are giving you a hard time about being in the program, and part of you wonders if it's worth the hassle. On one hand, you see the growth. On the other hand, the social cost feels high. Did I get that right?'

Notice the last question: 'Did I get that right?' Always end a summary by checking. You might have missed something. You might have misunderstood. Asking tells the person their story matters enough to get right."

"Pro tip: When you summarize, pay special attention to the change talk and include it. If someone mentioned wanting to be a better father, wanting to stay out of trouble, wanting to do something different — put that in the summary. Let them hear their own motivation reflected back."

Integrated Practice: Full OARS Conversation (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now we put it all together. Pair up. One of you is a resistant mentee. One of you is the mentor. The mentee's scenario: You've been in FORGE for three weeks and you're thinking about quitting. You haven't told anyone yet, but you're losing motivation.

Mentor — your job is to have a 5-minute conversation using all four OARS skills. Ask open questions. Deliver at least one affirmation. Use reflections — both simple and complex. Close with a summary. Don't try to fix anything. Don't try to convince them to stay. Just explore.

I'll call time at 5 minutes. Then switch roles."

Facilitator circulates during practice. Listen for: - Are they asking open questions or slipping into closed ones? - Are affirmations specific or generic? - Are reflections clean or loaded with judgment? - Are summaries capturing the key themes?

Debrief (5 min):

"How was that? Mentors — what was hardest? Most people say the hardest part is not giving advice. Your mentee is sitting there saying, 'I want to quit,' and every fiber of your being wants to say, 'Don't quit!' But what happens when you use OARS instead? The conversation goes deeper. And the person starts finding their own reasons to stay — which are always more powerful than yours."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round: Which OARS skill feels most natural to you, and which one is going to be the hardest to master?"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Homework for tonight: Have one real conversation in the dorm using OARS. All four skills. Pick someone who's dealing with something — it doesn't have to be heavy, just real. Use open questions, give at least one genuine affirmation, practice reflections, and try to close with a summary. Write about it in your journal: What did you say? How did the other person respond? What would you do differently?"

Tomorrow we put MI into FORGE-specific situations — the real stuff you're going to face as mentors. See you Thursday."

Session 47 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed — check on rolling with resistance homework
- OARS introduced and MI Quick Reference cards distributed
- Open questions taught — closed-to-open conversion exercise completed
- Affirmations taught — three rules (specific, genuine, effort-focused)
- Affirmation practice in pairs completed
- Simple and complex reflections taught with examples
- Reflection practice in triads completed
- Summaries taught with full example
- Integrated OARS practice in pairs completed (5 min each direction)
- Closing circle completed

- [] Homework assigned (real OARS conversation + journal)

SESSION 48: MI in FORGE Context

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 48 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Apply MI techniques to realistic FORGE mentoring scenarios 2. Use the "readiness ruler" (1-10 scale) to assess and explore someone's motivation 3. Demonstrate MI skills when a dorm member doesn't want to change 4. Use MI when someone is considering leaving the program 5. Integrate MI into conflict resolution conversations

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. How are you doing? And: **Tell us about the OARS conversation you had last night. What happened?**"*

Send the talking piece. Listen for successes and struggles. Common reports: "It felt weird not giving advice." "He actually opened up more than usual." "I couldn't think of a good open question in the moment." All of these are learning.

Review: OARS Quick Refresh (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Quick review. Someone give me one example of each — an open question, an affirmation, a reflection, and a summary. Just off the top of your head."

Call on four people. Correct or sharpen if needed. Move quickly — this is a warm-up, not a re-teach.

The Readiness Ruler (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Before we get into scenarios, I want to teach you one more MI tool. It's called the **Readiness Ruler**, and it's one of the simplest, most effective things you'll ever use as a mentor.*

Here's how it works. You ask someone: 'On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all ready and 10 is completely ready — how ready are you to [make this change]?'

That's it. One question. But what you do with the answer is where the magic is.

Let's say your mentee says he's at a 4. Most mentors would hear '4' and think: low. He's not ready. I need to convince him. Wrong.

Here's what you say: 'A 4. So you're not at a 1. What makes you a 4 and not a 1?'

Now he's telling you his reasons for change. He's arguing for change. You didn't have to make the argument — he's making it himself. Whatever he says next is change talk, and you reflect it back.

Then, if the conversation is going well, you can ask: 'What would it take to move from a 4 to a 5 or 6?' Now he's identifying what he needs. He's building his own plan.

The readiness ruler works because it gives people permission to not be at a 10. It meets them where they are. A 4 is real. And the distance from 4 to 5 is manageable. The distance from 4 to 10 is overwhelming."

Demonstrate with a volunteer:

"I need a volunteer. I'm going to play the mentor. You're a dorm member who's been getting into arguments every week. I'm going to use the readiness ruler."

Run a quick 2-minute demonstration. Show how "Why not a 1?" draws out change talk.

"See how that works? I never told him to stop arguing. I never lectured him. He told ME why he wants to change. That's the difference."

Quick practice (5 min):

"Pair up. One of you asks the readiness ruler question about any change the other person has been thinking about — real or scenario-based. Practice the follow-up: 'Why not a 1?' and 'What would it take to go up one number?'"

Scenario Block: MI in FORGE Situations (50 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now we take everything from this week and apply it to the real situations you're going to face. I'm going to set up three scenarios. For each one, we'll have two volunteers run the conversation in front of the group. Then we'll break it down together."

Scenario 1: The Dorm Member Who Doesn't Want to Change (15 min)

Facilitator sets the scene:

"Marcus has been in your dorm for two years. He runs a small gambling operation — cards, sports bets, commissary stakes. He's never been violent about it, but you've seen the tension it creates when people can't pay. Two weeks ago, a near-fight broke out over a debt. You've built a decent relationship with Marcus over the past few months. You decide to have a conversation.

Marcus's position: 'Gambling isn't hurting anyone. It's entertainment. People choose to play. If they can't afford to lose, they shouldn't sit down. I'm not the problem — they are.'

I need one person to play Marcus and one to play the mentor. Mentor — your only tools are OARS and the readiness ruler. You are not trying to make Marcus stop gambling today. You're trying to start a conversation that might lead somewhere eventually. Go."

Run the scene (5 min). Facilitator can freeze once to coach if the mentor gets stuck.

Group debrief (10 min): - What MI skills did the mentor use well? - Where did the mentor slip into advice-giving or arguing? - What stage of change is Marcus in? (*Precontemplation — he doesn't see a problem.*) - What's the realistic goal for this conversation? (*Not to change Marcus. To plant a seed. To keep the relationship open.*) - What open question would you have asked? - What reflection could have gone deeper?

Scenario 2: Someone Considering Leaving the Program (15 min)

Facilitator sets the scene:

"Terrence is a FORGE participant in Week 8. He's been doing good work — his thinking reports are solid, he participates in circle, he completed his service challenge. But today he pulls you aside and says: 'I don't know if I want to keep doing this. I got into it with my cellie last night and he called me soft for being in FORGE. A few other guys have been making comments too. I'm tired of defending myself. Maybe this isn't worth the hassle.'

This is a contemplation moment. Part of him wants to stay; part of him wants to leave. Your job is not to argue him into staying. Your job is to help him explore both sides.

I need a mentor and a Terrence. Go."

Run the scene (5 min). Facilitator can freeze once to coach.

Group debrief (10 min): - What stage of change is Terrence in? (*Contemplation — weighing pros and cons.*) - What's the biggest mistake a mentor could make here? (*Dismissing his concerns: "Don't worry about what they think." That invalidates his experience.*) - What affirmation was available? (*His eight weeks of effort. His solid work. The fact that he came to you instead of just disappearing.*) - What complex reflection could work? (*Something like: "The program is changing you, but the cost of being different in here is real — and you're wondering if the growth is worth the grief."*) - Did the mentor use the readiness ruler? If not, where could it have fit? (*"On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you want to stay in FORGE?" Then: "Why not a 1?"*)

Scenario 3: MI During Conflict Resolution (15 min)

Facilitator sets the scene:

"Two men in your dorm, Ray and Deon, have been in a cold war for a week. It started over a spot at the day room table. Ray was sitting there, got up to use the restroom, came back and Deon had taken his seat. Ray said something. Deon said something back. Now they're not speaking, and the tension is affecting the whole dorm. Other people are starting to take sides.

You decide to talk to each of them separately before attempting any mediation. You're starting with Ray.

Ray's position: 'He disrespected me. In front of everybody. I'm not talking to him. I don't have anything to say to him. If he wants to act like that, we don't need to be cool.'

I need a mentor and a Ray. Mentor — use MI to explore what's really going on. You're not mediating yet. You're just talking to Ray. Go."

Run the scene (5 min). Facilitator can freeze once to coach.

Group debrief (10 min): - On the surface, this is about a seat. What's it really about? (*Respect. Status. Being seen. Feeling disrespected in front of others.*) - What MI skills helped the mentor get beneath the surface? - What change talk might emerge? (*Ray might say something like, "I don't want this to blow up into something bigger" or "We used to be cool and I don't know why it got like this." Those are openings.*) - How does MI support the FORGE

conflict resolution model? (MI opens the door. The 5-step conflict model walks through it. MI gets someone to the point where they're willing to sit down. The conflict model gives them the structure to resolve it.)

Facilitator:

*"Here's the key insight from all three of these scenarios: **MI is not a replacement for your other skills. It's the tool that makes your other skills possible.** You can't mediate a conflict if neither person is willing to talk. You can't teach someone who doesn't want to learn. You can't mentor someone who doesn't trust you. MI opens doors. Everything else you've learned walks through them."*

Putting It All Together: The MI Mentor Mindset (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we close out this week, I want to name something. Learning MI is going to feel unnatural at first. Everything in your experience tells you to push. To argue. To tell people what they need to hear. To be direct. And directness has its place — you've been direct your whole life.

But MI asks you to do something harder than being direct. It asks you to be patient. To sit with someone's ambivalence without trying to resolve it for them. To trust that the person across from you has the capacity to find their own path — and that your job is to help them find it, not to build it for them.

That's the MI mindset for FORGE mentors:

- ***I don't have to fix anyone.***
- ***I trust that people have their own reasons for change — and my job is to help them find those reasons.***
- ***Resistance is not my enemy. It's information.***
- ***The speed of change is not up to me.***
- ***Asking the right question is more powerful than giving the right answer.***

You're going to get this wrong at first. You're going to slip into advice-giving. You're going to ask a closed question when you should have asked an open one. You're going to forget to reflect. That's fine. MI is a practice, not a performance. The more you use it, the more natural it becomes.

Next week, we start simulation training. Everything you've learned — conflict resolution, communication, de-escalation, teaching, facilitation, MI — all of it comes together. You're going to practice responding to real scenarios in real time, with coaching and feedback. It's intense, and it's the thing that's going to make you ready for Phase 3."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Final round for the week. Complete this sentence: 'The biggest thing I'm taking from MI week is...'"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Homework over the weekend:

- 1. **Practice MI in at least two real conversations.** Use OARS. Use the readiness ruler if the opportunity comes up. Journal about each one — what you said, what they said, what you'd do differently.*
- 2. **Review your MI Quick Reference card.** Know it cold. You'll be using these skills in simulations starting Tuesday.*
- 3. **Review the FORGE Conflict Resolution model** (5 steps from the handbook). Next week you'll be using MI and conflict resolution together in simulated scenarios.*

Tuesday we begin simulation training. I'm going to be honest with you — simulations are the most challenging part of Phase 2. They're also the most valuable. You're going to mess up. You're going to freeze. You're going to say the wrong thing. That's the whole point. Better to make mistakes here, with coaching, than out there for real. Good week. Rest up. See you Tuesday."

Session 48 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed — OARS homework debrief
- Quick OARS review completed
- Readiness ruler taught with demonstration and practice
- Scenario 1 completed: Dorm member who doesn't want to change (Marcus/gambling)
- Scenario 2 completed: Someone considering leaving FORGE (Terrence)
- Scenario 3 completed: MI during conflict resolution (Ray/Deon seat dispute)
- MI mindset principles shared
- Connection made to upcoming simulation training
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (2 real MI conversations + review reference card + review conflict resolution model)



FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 16

What to Watch For

Natural MI talent: Some participants will take to MI immediately. They're the ones who've always been good listeners. Note who they are — they can help model for the group during simulation training.

The fixers: Some participants will struggle with not giving advice. They genuinely want to help and their instinct is to tell people what to do. This is a strength channeled the wrong way. Coach them: "Your caring is an asset. We're just redirecting how you express it."

Surface-level practice: Watch for participants going through the motions — asking open questions that sound right but have no depth, or giving affirmations that are technically specific but don't feel genuine. Push for authenticity.

Resistance to MI itself: Some participants may think MI is "soft" or manipulative. Address it directly: "MI isn't about being soft. It's about being strategic. Confrontation feels tough, but it rarely works. MI feels gentle, but it changes people."

Common Week 16 Challenges

"**This feels fake.**" Normal response to any new communication skill. "Everything feels fake the first time you try it. The first time you used the STOP technique, it felt fake too. Now some of you do it without thinking. MI will get there."

"**Why can't I just tell someone the truth?**" Good question. "You can. And sometimes you should. MI isn't about never being direct. It's about choosing when to be direct and when to draw someone out. If a man has a weapon, you don't use the readiness ruler — you refer. But if a man is making slow, self-destructive choices, direct confrontation usually just makes him defend those choices."

"**What if they never change?**" Honest answer: "Some won't. Not everyone is ready, and not everyone will get ready in your timeline. That's not your failure. Your job is to keep the door open and keep the relationship intact. Some of the most important conversations you'll have as a mentor are with people who don't change for months — and then one day, something shifts."

Preparation for Week 17

- Review the Simulation Training format in the Program Design (Part III)
- Prepare scenario cards for Simulation 1 (Property Dispute) and the Introduction to Simulations session
- Set up the room for simulations — clear a space for the "stage" area
- Review the scoring rubric — be prepared to explain it clearly
- Prepare observer role cards (what to watch for during simulations)
- Have extra scenario copies for role-players
- If Senior Mentors are available, brief them on their role during simulations (they may play scenario characters)