



Title: Motivational Interviewing - Example

Author: Rachel Hayton

My name's Rachel Hayton and I'm a farm animal vet with Synergy Farm Health in the Southwest of England. I do a lot of dairy work and I have a particular interest in mastitis prevention. That's a good question. I think many farm vets are aware that there's areas on their client's farm where they could really bring about big improvements, but there seems to be a sort of gap in communication or in receptiveness on the part of the farmer.

We often end up blaming our clients for that because we perceive that we have all the answers and it's just the client that's not interested and I'm not sure that it's quite that simple. I first got involved in Alison Bard's PhD. She came to our practise and she told us about a really exciting project that she was coming out. So some of us did some recordings of conversations we were having with our clients. And then we went through some training in motivational interviewing techniques. And then we went and recorded more conversations with our clients. And they were mostly I think on the topics of mastitis and lameness. Alison then scored these recordings to see whether the training had made any difference in the way that we actually communicated. Absolutely I couldn't recommend motivational interviewing training enough I think there's something in there for everybody. We're not all necessarily going to take it on wholesale it's quite a complex area, but I think there are little nuggets in there that can make a difference to all of us in our sort of everyday working lives. I'd say MI comes in useful absolutely everywhere. And I wouldn't say that I've really got the hang of it yet. It's something that I'm always trying to work on but it's really made me examine the way that I communicate with clients and sometimes the ways in which I can inadvertently really switch them off or make them respond in undesirable ways. And in many instances that I've managed to turn that around and I've managed to change the way I interact so as to just get much more positive responses. And at the most simple level, I just try not to jump in there without getting permission first. So I don't sort of just plough on regardless when it's clear that it's not the right moment or the they're not really ready to be having that conversation.

So in a scenario where I've done an investigation and I've got a sort of short list of issues that I think are really limiting for that farm, I would sit down with the farmer and I would present that information. In as neutral a way as possible and very respectful of the fact that they are the ones that are going to provide the answer. So I'm looking for them to interpret the information that I've given them and to come up with solutions because they're the ones that would understand their farm best. So I'm much less likely now to just sort of say what I think needs to happen. And in the past you know when I did that I was far more frequently that I would get the reasons why it can't happen and the reasons why it's difficult. So now I'd say it's much more collaborative. And I think actually I show a lot more

empathy with my clients as a result because I get more understanding of the barriers to change and the reasons why they feel ambivalent about certain subjects. So one of the things that I'm still working on but is incredibly useful is learning which questions are going to elicit sustained talk and change talk. So I sort of ... It doesn't come naturally yet but that it's a really good thing to do. Sometimes it's just to work your way around the quadrant and explore ambivalence and exploring how people feel about something. And it's uncovered some really interesting things on occasion that I wouldn't have found out otherwise.

My top one would be to always elicit permission before you start to discuss a subject. I think we have a habit of just diving right in there when we can see a problem and it might not be the right moment it might be a really touchy subject. There might be a variety of reasons why it's not gonna be well received. So that would probably be my ... It's a really simple one maybe other people are already really good at it but I think it's the single change that I made that made a difference. Oh gosh this is a big topic. So I would always get permission before raising something. And if it's not a good moment I will ask you know when is a good moment, make an appointment that suits my client. When I'm involved in a mastitis investigation for instance we're talking about the control measures that are likely to make a real difference, I'm far better at sort of providing neutral information than just eliciting how mine my client interprets that information and where they see the solutions. And certainly I'm much less prone to just dish out unwanted advice. I'm also much better at recognising situations where I would be eliciting sustained talk. So you know if I just tell someone what I think should happen, they're much more likely to give me the counter argument of why it can't happen or why that's gonna be difficult. So I've got better strategies for bringing about change talk. One really useful strategy which you can throw in at any point in a conversation is especially if things are ... You're finding it a bit hard and you don't quite know what to ask is to just throw in a reflection and it gives the other person a bit more time to tell you what they want to say. And also it's a really good opportunity to check that your understanding of what they're telling you is correct. I think some of my best moments have been when farmers have told me that they've managed to solve a problem. And I was fully aware that it was something that we did in discussion and that they managed to do it with some help for me with suggestions and expertise, but that they've owned it as an issue and that they felt that it was their achievement. And that for me actually is a really good result. I think the same principles apply when talking about antimicrobial stewardship as any other area. Often we are either trying to delve into the way farmers are using their antimicrobials on farm and using that pre-med protocols in which case it's really important to ask a lot of open questions and to find out how they behave when they are in certain situations. Most of the time when farmers are using antimicrobials on farm, we're not present. We're hoping that they're following our protocols but they're the ones that have got the problem in front of them that they need to solve. And so it's really important that we ask those evocative open questions too to put ourselves in that position how are you gonna behave when you're in that situation what's gonna be the best thing to do.

When it comes to prevention again, am I is really useful for getting permission to get involved in the first place and using that the sort of right sort of questioning to evoke change talk and just generally making a plan together for how to to put a control plan into place. I think we focus a lot on our technical ability and I think we maybe neglect our communication skills. I know a lot of us have really good relationships with our clients but

even then I think MI can add a lot to that. So I think it would be something that's definitely worth exploring for everybody. I think for me motivational interviewing is about looking at things from somebody else's point of view when you're trying to embark on solving a problem together.

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