



How to Talk so Clients Will Listen

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Objectives

Participants will examine common communication behaviors that cause a breakdown in rapport or lead to misunderstandings

Participants will discuss communication techniques that can improve their communication with clients

Participants will be able to integrate basic principles of motivational interviewing, solution focused brief therapy, and cognitive behavioral interventions into their communications with clients



Objective 1

Participants will examine common communication behaviors that cause a breakdown in rapport or lead to misunderstandings

The image shows several ornate, gold-colored picture frames hanging on a blue wall. The frames are highly decorative, featuring intricate carvings of flowers and leaves. One frame is in the foreground, showing its corner and side. Another frame is partially visible above it, and a third is to the right, mostly obscured by the text. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the gold and the depth of the carvings.

Relational Frame Theory

- Relational Frame Theory
 - The way we relate to information (and information to other information) is as important as the information itself
 - Filtered through
 - Power Differentials
 - All treatment courts are inherently coercive
 - Experience with “the system”
 - Antisocial cognition and personality
 - Stage of change
- What we say and what they hear are different things

Who Are We Talking To Anyway?

- Is it the person or the drugs speaking?
- Anti-Social Cognition (Thoughts/Beliefs)
- Anti-Social Personality
 - Logic
 - Projection of Consequences
 - Decision Making
- Someone we have authority over
- Someone who is under threat
 - Liberty
 - Existential

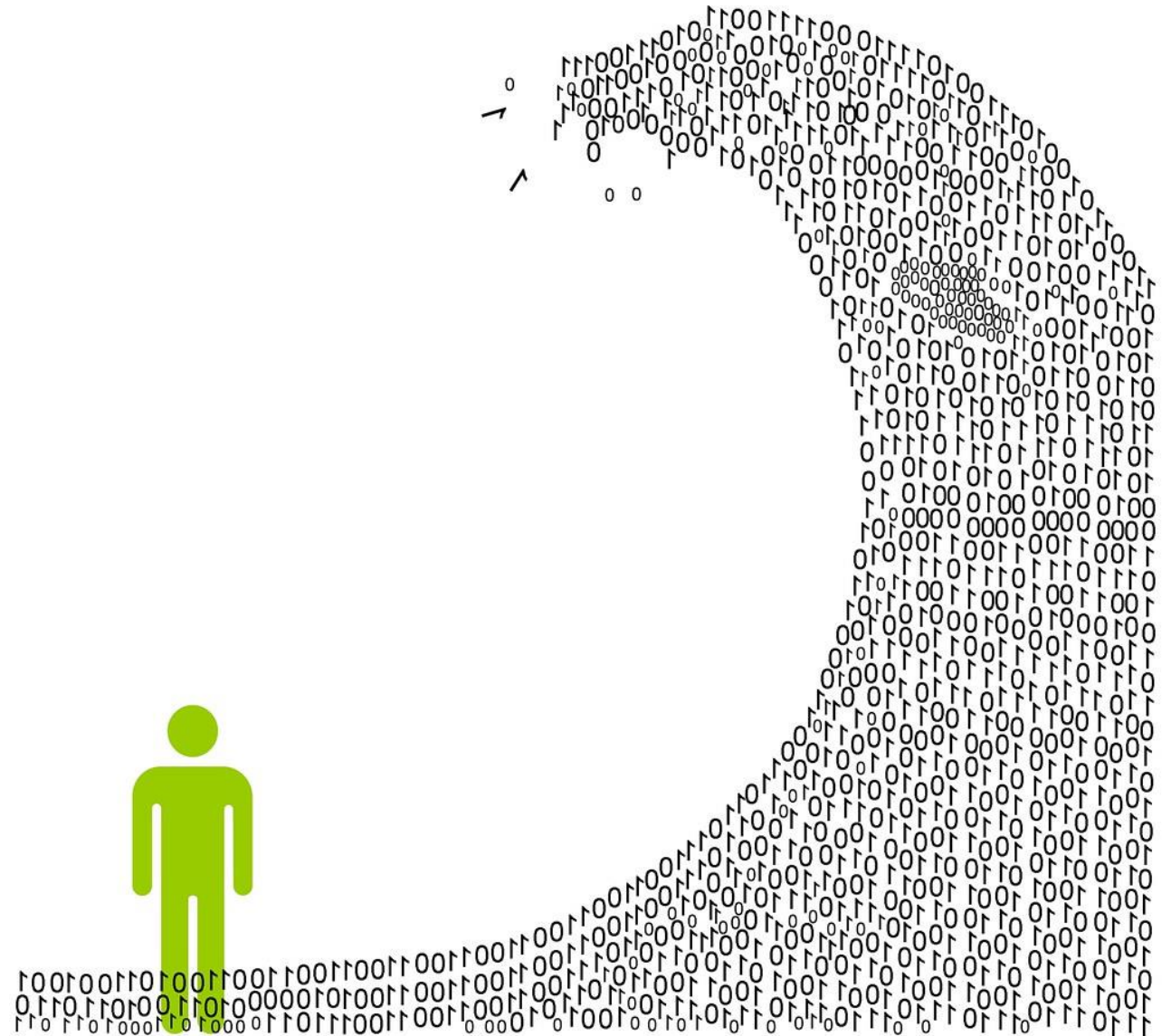


The Intervention



The Information Trap

- Trying to make change by “educating”
 - You mean “Here is something you should know.”
 - They hear “I think you are stupid.”
- Most people already have the knowledge it just hasn’t persuaded them. Repeating it will increase resistance
- Decision making is not based on information or logic
 - We explain decision making in logical terms, but the actual process of deciding is largely emotional and unconscious



The Lecture Trap

- “Talking at”
 - You mean “This is important!”
 - They hear “Wah wah wah wah wah...”
- Just a more intense version of the Information Trap
- How can they talk themselves into change if they aren’t the one talking?



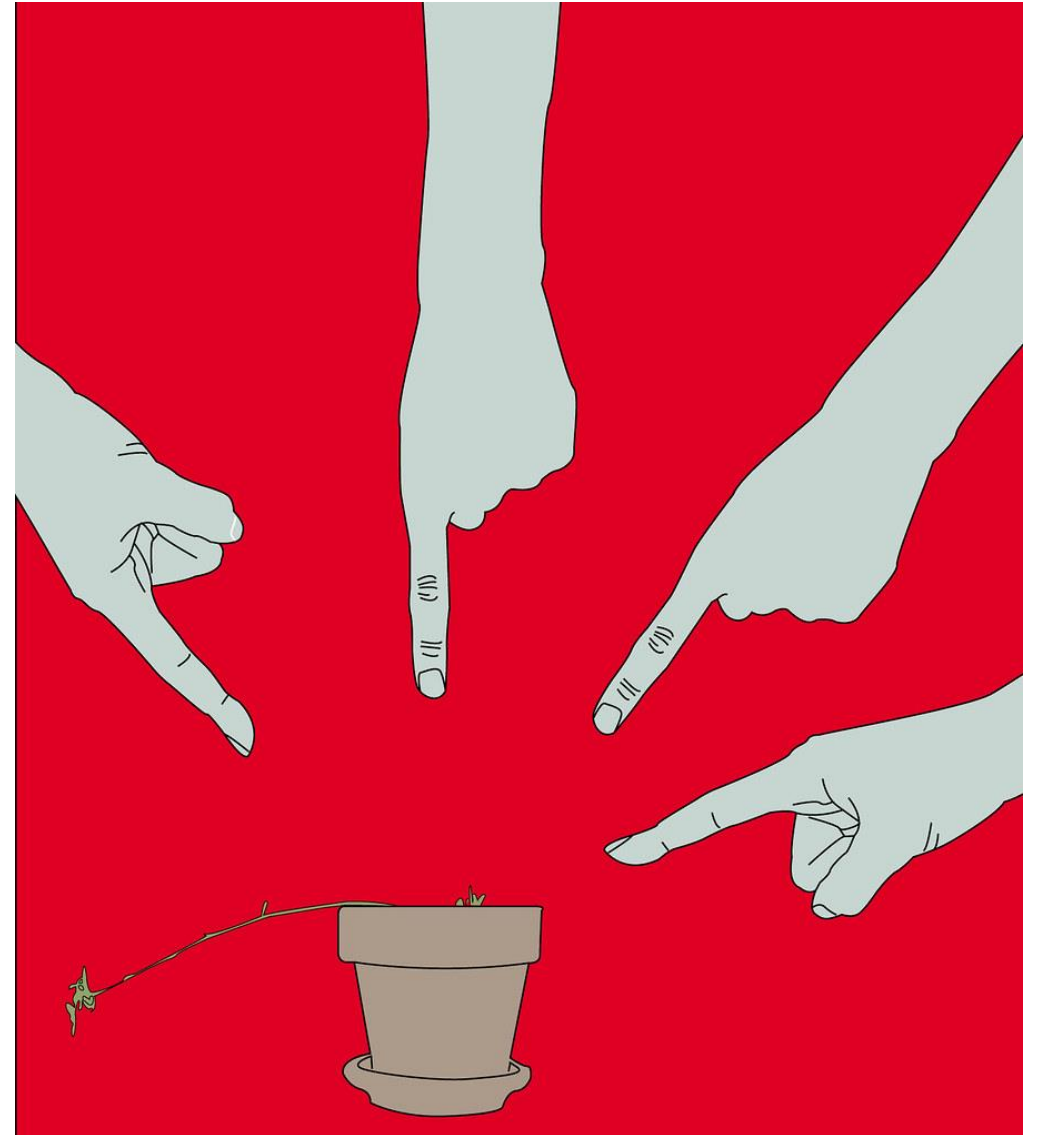
The Labeling Trap

- Describing people as a label – “Addict”
“Offender”
- Telling the person what they think/feel/believe
- Often starts with “you. . .” and includes words like “always”, “never”, “are”
- Labels cause people to fight against the label instead of engage in the conversation
- Labels back people into corners
- People will often play the role of how they are labeled



The Blaming Trap

- Focused on finding fault, gaining confession, or placing blame
 - You mean “I want you to take responsibility.”
 - They hear “You are the problem.”
- The natural responses:
 - Lie – this makes the situation worse, and it tends to trigger and re-assert anti-social cognition
 - Blame you for something else - Tit for Tat





Taking Sides Trap

- Conversations where you are the voice of change
 - Sentences start with “You need/should...”
 - You mean “I can help you.”
 - They hear “I know better than you.”
- Natural response is to assume adversarial role or shut down
 - Increases resistance
 - Increases sustain talk
- Decreases professional alliance

The Question-and-Answer Trap

- Conversation or interrogation?
- Lots of closed-ended questions
 - You mean, “I need to get to the bottom of this.”
 - They hear, “I’m out to get you.”
- They feel powerless/trapped
- Decreases professional alliance
- Shut down or push back
- Perry Mason/Logic doesn’t work



MI Non-Adherent Behaviors

- Persuade
 - Overt attempts to change the client's opinions, attitudes, or behavior using logic, compelling arguments, self-disclosure, or facts
 - Offering advice, suggestions, tips, opinions, or solutions without explicit or strong contextual permission
- Confront
 - Disagreeing, arguing, correcting, shaming, blaming, criticizing, labeling, warning, moralizing, ridiculing, or questioning the client's honesty

What the Evidence Says

- Conformity Orientation Style
 - Decreases client self-efficacy and outcomes
 - Increases client reactance
- Authoritarian Communication Style
 - Increases mistrust and miscommunication
 - May increase criminal thinking – power orientation (DV)







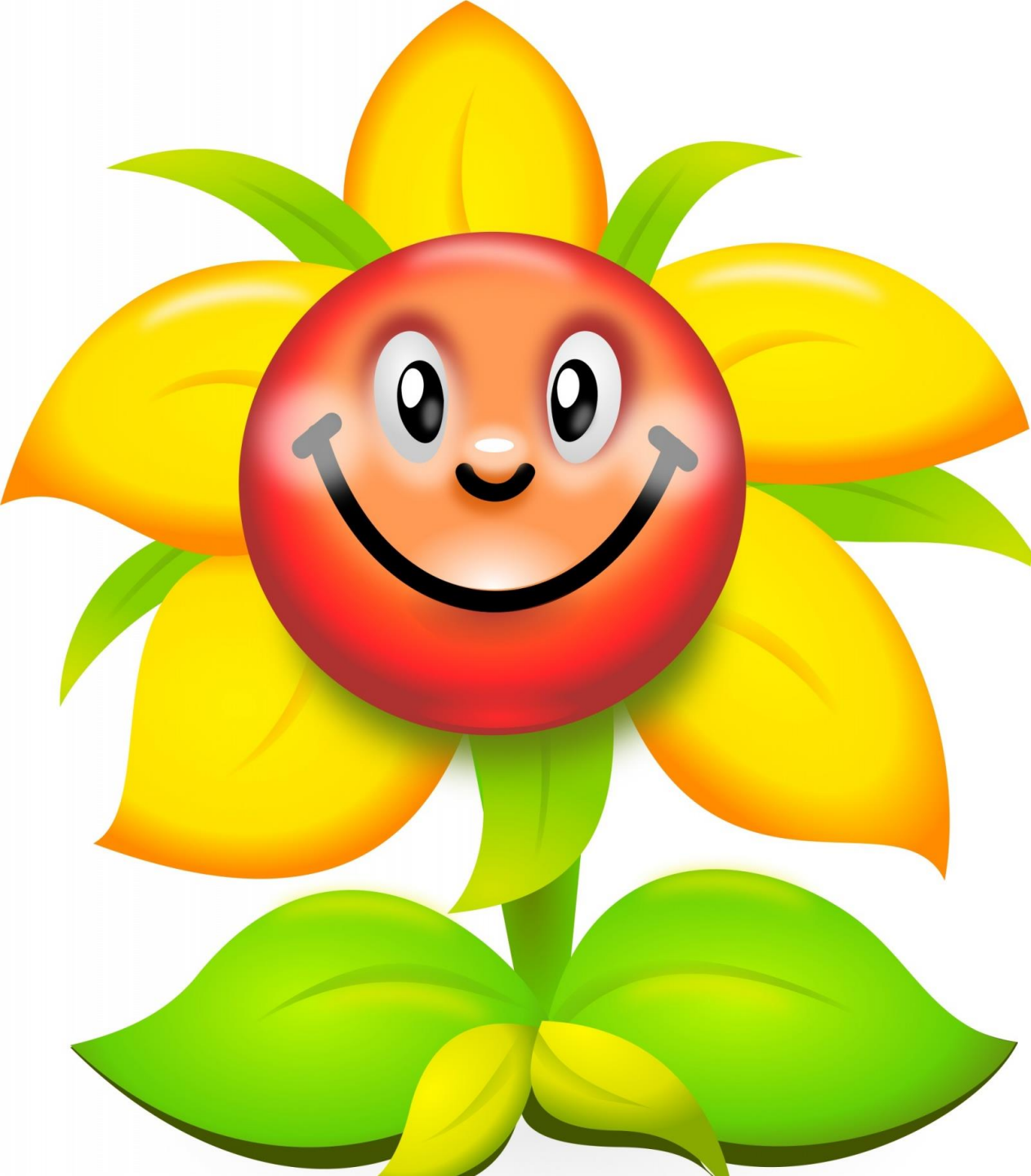
Objective 2

Participants will discuss communication techniques that can improve their communication with clients



What the Evidence Says

- Conversational Communication Style
 - Increases client self-efficacy and outcomes
 - Decreases client reactance
- Motivational Interviewing
 - Metanalysis is almost universal in showing MI substantially improves outcomes over no counseling
 - In 29% of studies brief MI intervention outperformed standard care (AODA)
 - Increased engagement & retention (Offenders)
 - Increased change behavior (Offenders)



Attitude Matters

- How you see the client matters
 - What words do you use in your mind when you think about your clients?
 - Do you think they will succeed?
 - You don't have to see them as special little blooming flowers but **are you seeing them as complete people and that you are just one small part of their world**
- What is your attitude on MI? EBP?
 - If you don't believe this is the path to success, why should they?

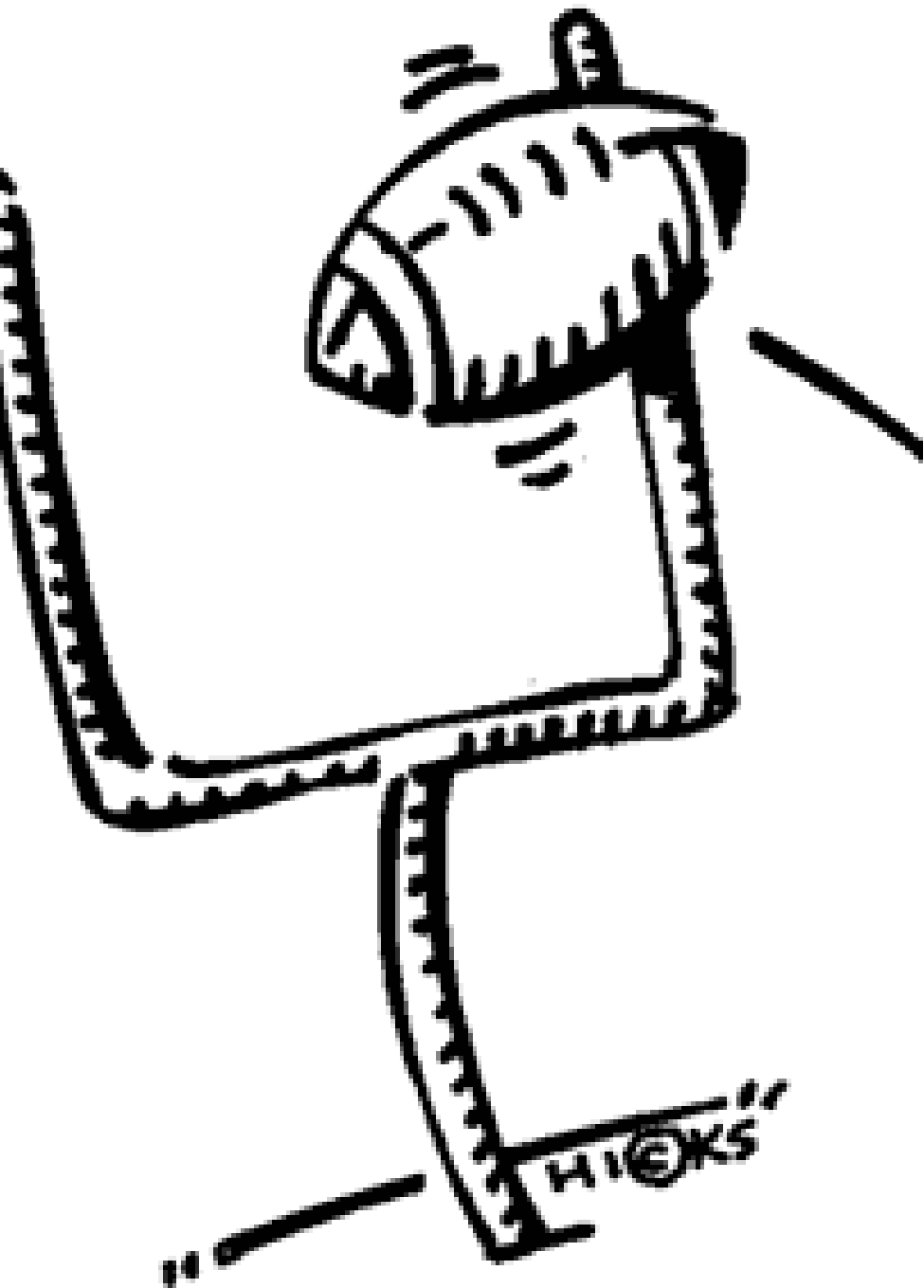


"TALK LESS,
~~SMILE MORE~~"
Listen

What You Do Matters

- Modeling prosocial interactions hits all the Big 4 Criminogenic Needs
 - Antisocial Cognition
 - Antisocial Personality
 - Antisocial Associates
 - Family/Marital
- You may be the only source of prosocial interactions
- Reverse is also true – Authoritarian style can increase risk for DV offenders





Set Explicit Goals Upfront

- Lead with what you need to say or accomplish
 - “I need to address the positive drug test with you.”
 - “I need to review our information and make sure you know about your next court date.”
- Invite them to establish a clear goal
 - “What do you want to make sure gets heard?”
 - “Then we can move onto things you may want to work on, what is one thing you really want to accomplish during our time?”



Work Smart Not Hard

- Establish habit and routine with clients
- Cognitive dissonance does all the work
 - Ambivalence
 - Natural Consequences
 - “What do you wish the outcome had been?
How do you get there?”

Would You be Willing? When/What/How?

- “would you be willing to” or “are you open to”
 - People want to be seen as willing and open; they are more likely to respond in a positive way
- Assume future success in your language.
 - “If you’re not ready for that *yet*. When would you be open to work on that?”
 - “If you’re not ready for that *yet*, what can we do right now?”





Cycle the Puck



3 Questions to Ask Yourself



Am I listening to
speak or
listening to
think?

- If we are waiting our turn to say something we aren't really listening?
- Objectively repeat what you heard in your head before thinking about what you want to say



Who's the boss?



- It is hard to hold a good conversation if you aren't walking side-by-side
- If the client's agenda isn't present, why would they be present
- Speaking from authority tends to trigger antisocial responses from clients



Does it feel like wrestling or dancing?

- If it feels hard for you it is hard for them
- If there is significant resistance, there is a disconnect and they are not hearing you



An illustration featuring several stylized human figures interacting with large, colorful gears (teal, light green, and yellow) and a target icon. One person is climbing a ladder to reach a gear, another is using a magnifying glass, and others are holding or adjusting the gears. The background includes light blue clouds and a dashed line.

Objective 3

Participants will be able to integrate basic principles of motivational interviewing, solution focused brief therapy, and cognitive behavioral interventions into their communications with clients

The Three Methods of MI

Ask

- Permission
- Open Questions
- Closed Questions

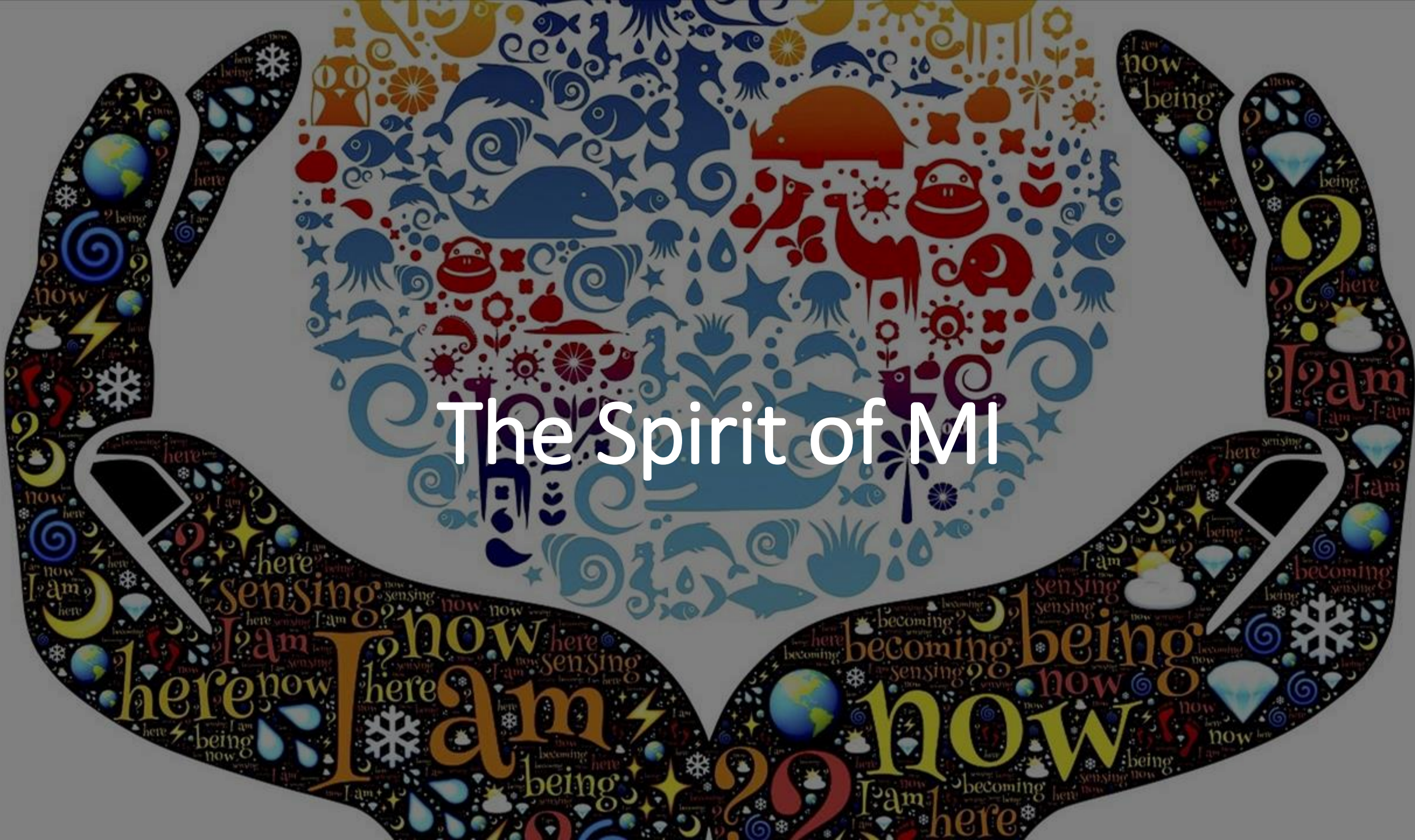
Tell

- Give Feedback
- Inform When Asked
- Emphasize Autonomy

Listen

- Reflect
- Summarize
- Affirmations

The Spirit of MI





Collaboration

Partnership, joint decision making, acknowledge the client's expertise about themselves



Acceptance

Communicates self-worth, accurate empathy, affirmations and respects the client's autonomy and agency



Partnership

Act as a partner to develop a collaboration with the client's own expertise



Evocation

Inquisitive, an active exploration of the client's perspectives, values, and motives

The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

“MI is not a verb. You don't “MI” someone. Similarly you don't do MI “on” or “to” someone. All of these speech forms imply a kind of expert/recipient relationship that is inconsistent with the underlying assumptions and spirit of MI. The appropriate prepositions are to do MI “for” or “with” someone.”

4 Principles of MI

Resist the righting reflex

Understand the client's own motivations

Listen with empathy

Empower the patient

“

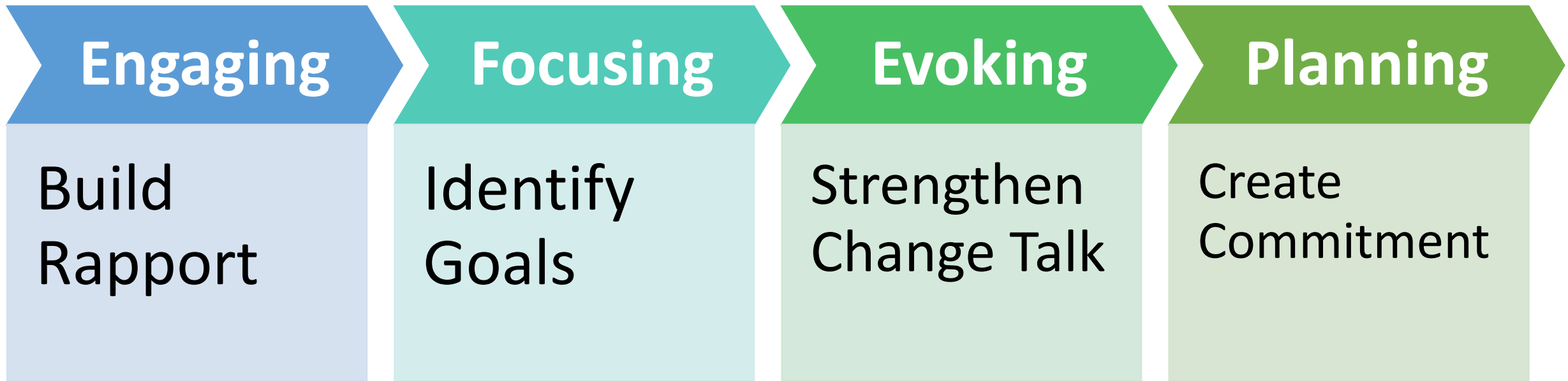
Using motivational interviewing in the proper spirit requires almost constant internal monitoring by the therapist. Certain emotions, such as an urge to persuade, confront, or warn the client are a sign to stop and choose another direction for our therapeutic efforts.

Theresa Moyers & Stephen Rollnick, 2002



Intentional & Directive

| The Four Process of MI



Types of Change Talk – DARN CAT



Preparatory Change Talk

Desire

Ability

Reasons

Need



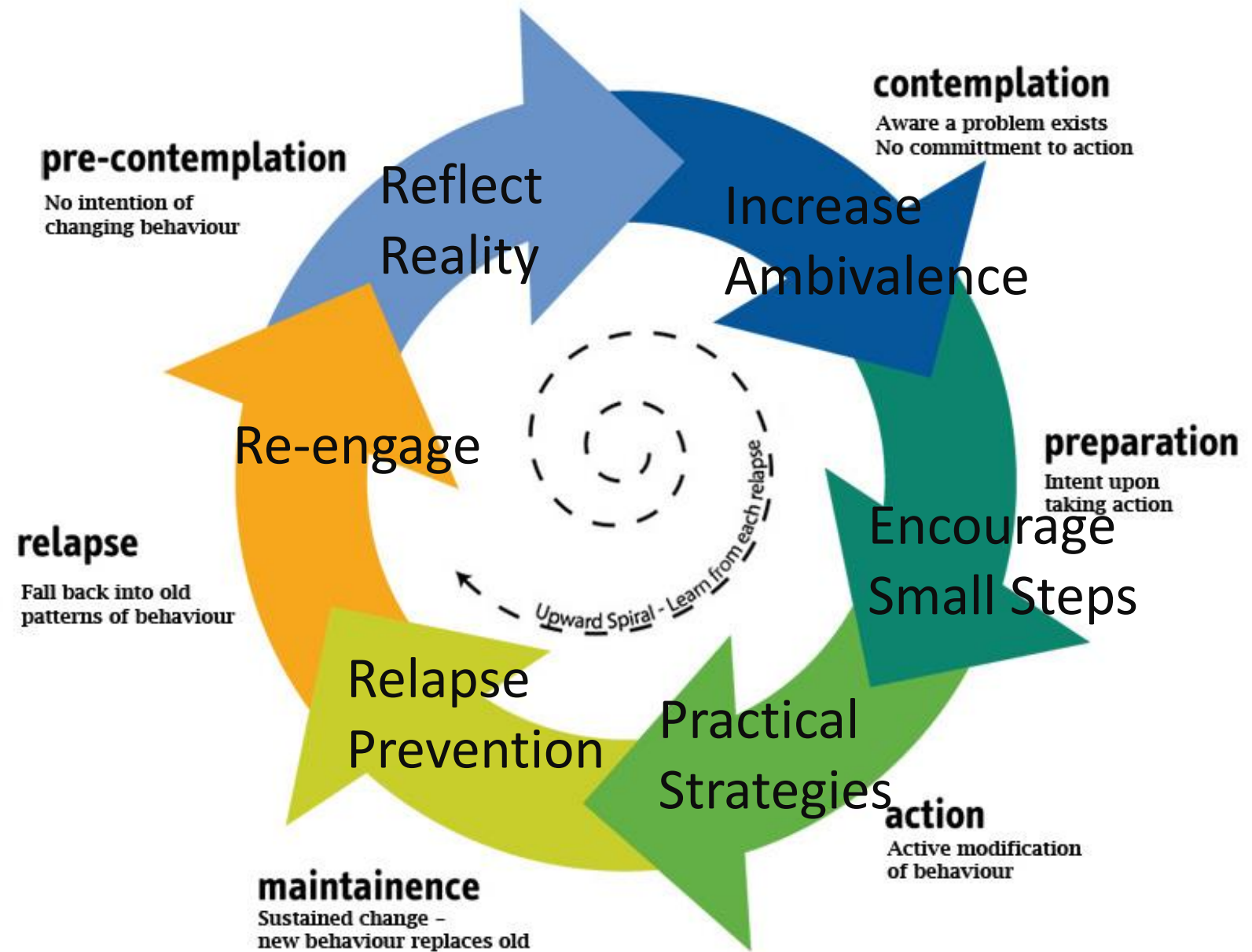
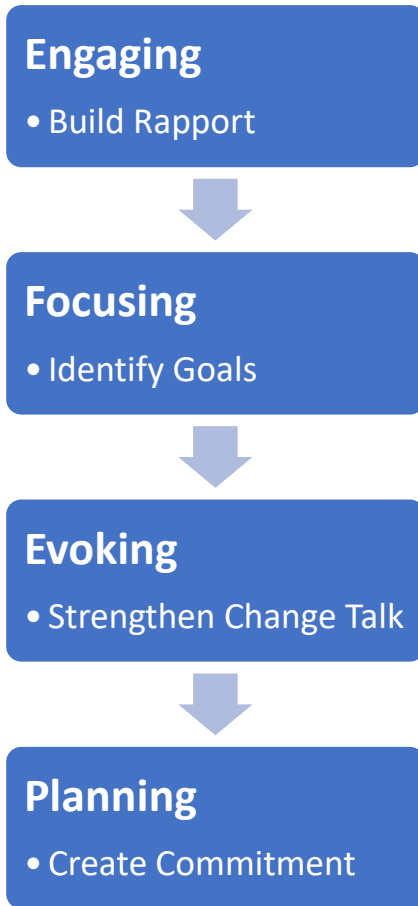
Implementing Change Talk

Commitment

Activation

Taking Steps

Stages of Change



Transtheoretical Model of Change
Prochaska & DiClemente

“

MI is directed toward particular behavior change goals. A key process is to help clients resolve ambivalence by evoking their own intrinsic motivations for change.

William Miller & Theresa Moyers, 2006



Focus



The Solution Focused Brief Therapy Joke

What makes a
great SFBT
therapist?

*They have no clue
what the client's
problem is.*



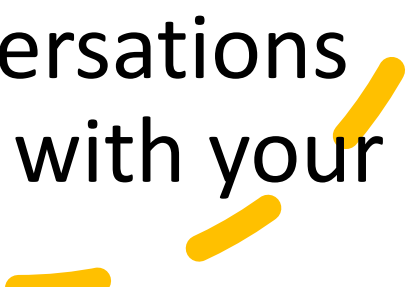


Tell me
what
happened?

How often has a client had a sudden epiphany or behavior change when you were grilling them about the details of what happened?

How often have clients become more positive and felt more hope during one of these conversations?

How often have these conversations improved your relationship with your client?



What Matters?

Problem

- It has happened and can't be changed
- Clients already skilled
- Interrogation / Labelling / Shame
- The client already knows what happened

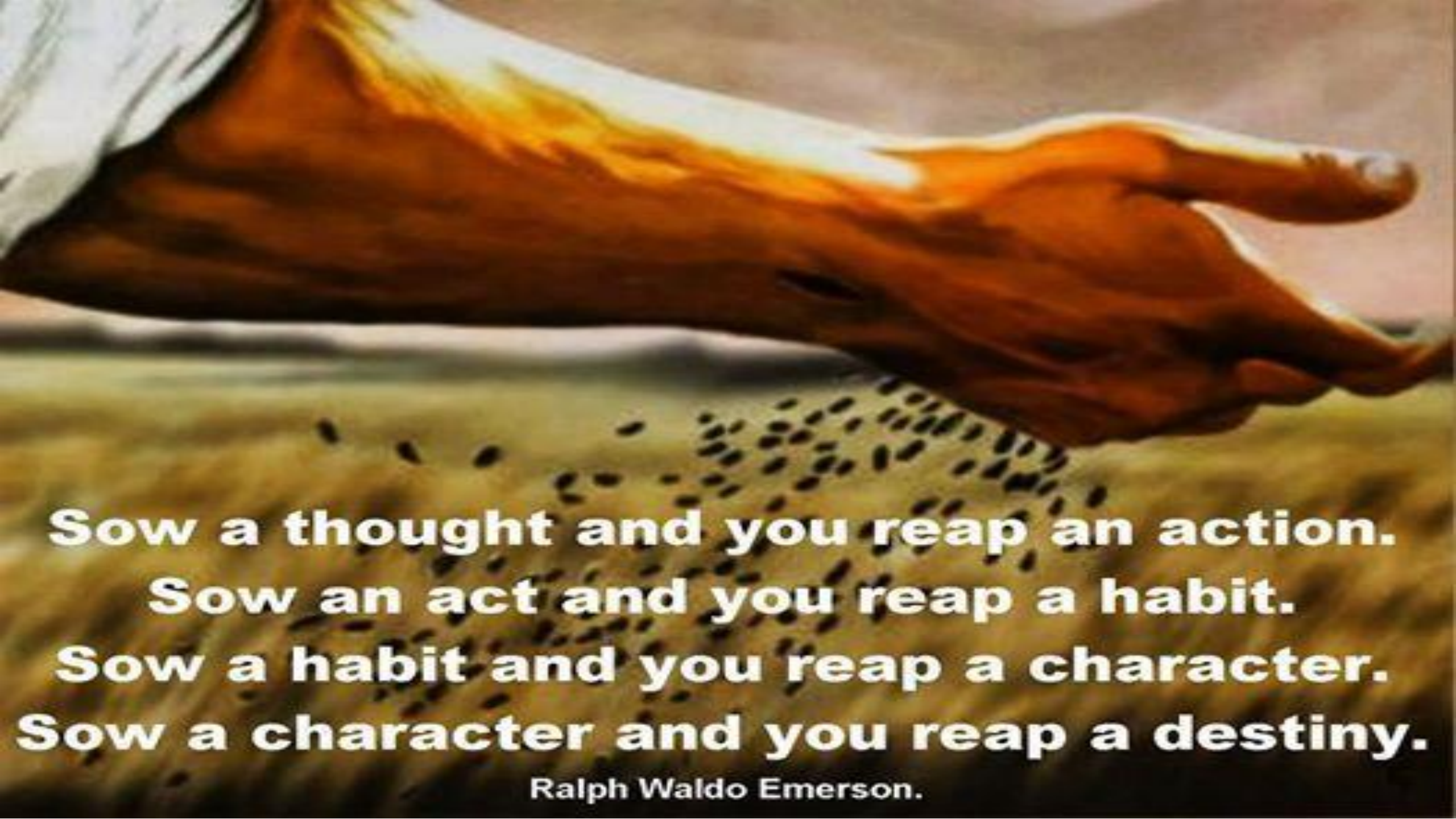
Solution

- This is the next step from where they are
- Develops skills addressing criminogenic needs
- Builds alliance / rapport
- Provides hope

“Enforcing sanctions based on lack of progress does not mean switching to a more heavy-handed style. An agent can enforce orders and assess sanctions without leaving motivational strategies behind. . . . Agents can collaborate with the offender while still being true to their agency roles. They can respect personal choice yet disapprove of the behavior.”

Will You
What ~~Were~~ You
Thinking?!?





Sow a thought and you reap an action.

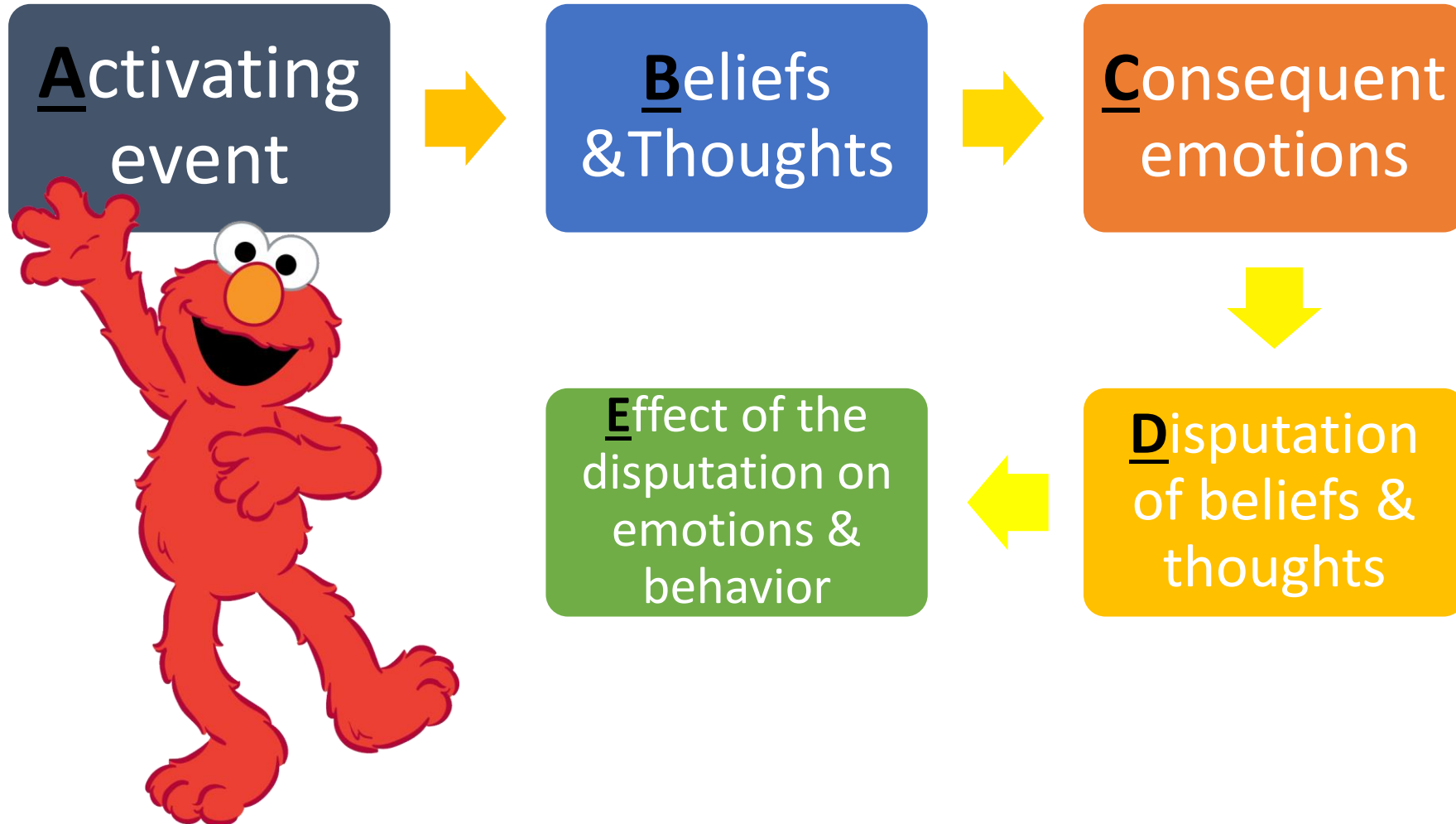
Sow an act and you reap a habit.

Sow a habit and you reap a character.

Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

CBT Easy As ABC



Identify New Thinking

- When clients express a goal or an action they want to take, ask what they will think about or remember that will make it happen
 - Not optimistic but **USEFUL**
- Ask them to express it out loud
- Help them try it on like a coat
- Next time, ask them if it helped
 - If not, try to think of something that would help





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