



COMMON LANGUAGE for PSYCHOTHERAPY (clp) PROCEDURES
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MOTIVATIONAL ENHANCEMENT THERAPY (MET)

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Definition: Giving the client personalized feedback on assessment results and formulating a change plan in addition to standard motivational-interviewing elements (see separate clp entry) of expressing empathy through reflection, developing discrepancies between clients' present behaviours and their values and goals, avoiding client resistance, and supporting client self-efficacy.

Elements: MET adds to motivational interviewing by helping clients understand how their problem's status compares with that of the average person. Clients complete a structured assessment of problem behaviours (e.g. for an alcohol problem this might include measures of alcohol dependence, frequency and intensity of drinking, and of other alcohol-related problems such as liver function). The therapist then asks if clients wish to learn the results, gives those in relation to available norms and interpretation guidelines, and discusses the clients' reactions to the results, which often jars with their values and goals.

Related Procedures: *Decisional balance exercise, motivational interviewing.*

Applications: MET is used mainly for alcohol and drug dependence and gambling, to enhance motivation before therapy or as a standalone procedure. It is often offered individually in 1-4 sessions but can also be used in groups.

1st Use? Miller et al (1992)

References:

1. Miller WR, Zweben A, DiClemente CC, Rychtarik RG (1992) *Motivational enhancement therapy manual: a clinical research guide for therapists treating individuals with alcohol abuse and dependence*. Rockville, MD: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.
2. Miller WR, Rollnick S (2003) *Motivational interviewing: Preparing people to change. Second edition*. New York: Guilford.
3. Project Match Research Group (1997) Matching alcoholism treatments to client heterogeneity: Project MATCH post-treatment drinking outcomes. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 58, 7-29.

Case Illustration (Hodgins, unpublished)

Tom's fiancée enquired about individual therapy for Tom's serious online sports betting. She accompanied Tom to his first appointment but remained in the waiting room while he saw the therapist. In motivational-interview style the therapist explored the specifics of Tom's gambling and his readiness to change, his fiancée's and his own concerns, and what Tom liked about sports betting in order to help him recognise ambivalence about giving it up. Discussion and reflection of Tom's experiences clarified that his betting impeded his goals of financial stability, buying a home, and starting a family ("What I hear you saying is that though you really love the challenge of picking winners, you're thinking that this costs way too much money - it will be very

difficult to save enough money to purchase a house if it keeps on. Buying a house is important if you and your wife start a family. Is that right?”). At times Tom expressed frustration at his fiancée’s insistence that he deal with this issue. The therapist reflected back Tom’s feelings about this without taking sides or exploring it in more detail (“*It’s hard for you that your fiancée is taking this so seriously*”), and reflected his strengths including his reduction of alcohol consumption over recent years. To explore how much Tom should be concerned the therapist invited Tom to estimate his expenditures on gambling, time spent gambling, and problem severity, and presented his scores in relation to Canadian norms from a prevalence survey. Tom was not surprised that he gambled much more than the average Canadian man but was a bit taken aback that he was spending 25% of his income on gambling and that his problem severity was moderately-high. The therapist encouraged Tom to reflect upon these results using a motivational-interviewing style (“*This is surprising to you. You don’t see yourself as someone who spends that much on a leisure activity. In other areas of your life you’re quite responsible*”), and toward the end of the session asked him what he was thinking about his goals. Tom now said he strongly wanted to address his online sports betting. He did this in cognitive behaviour therapy over six subsequent sessions.