



Motivational Interviewing: How and Why to Collaborate with Patients

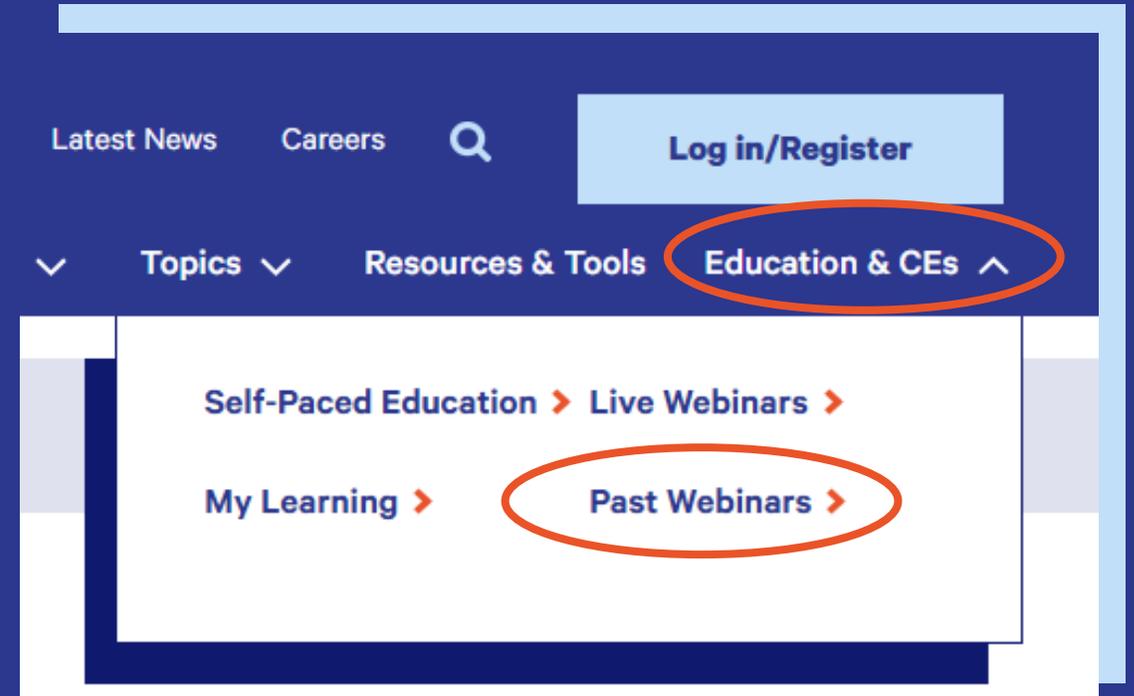
November 6, 2025

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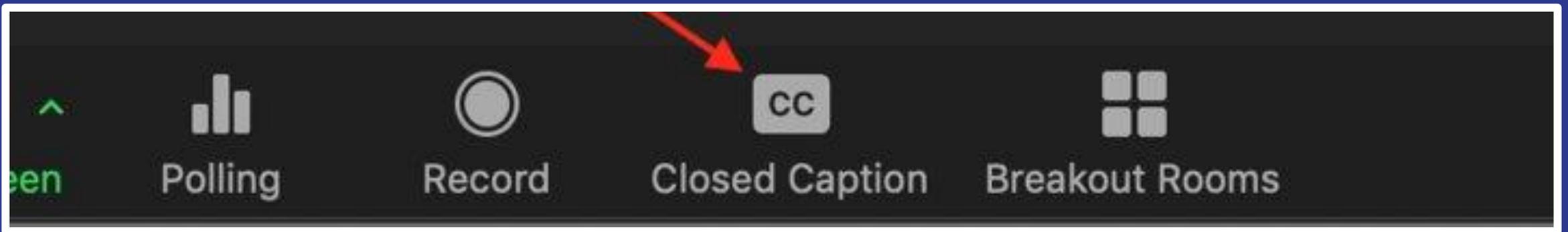
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Webinar

Motivational Interviewing: How and Why to Collaborate with Patients



Thursday
November 6, 2025



7-8 p.m. ET

1 CE Credit



Moderator

**Mallori DeSalle, MA, LMHC, NCC,
CCMHC, CHP, CPS-II**
Indiana University



Presenter

Matt Allen, DDS
DifferentKind



Presenter

Sam Wakim, DMD, MPH
Horizon NJ Health

Learning Objectives

- **Describe** the core principles and techniques of motivational interviewing.
- **Explain** how motivational interviewing can help patients overcome barriers to oral health and sustain better long-term habits.
- **Apply** motivational interviewing strategies, using real-world scenarios, to enhance patient oral health outcomes.
- **Identify** additional resources to continue developing motivational interviewing skills.

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Polling Question

How often do you think empathy impacts care?

- a) Always
- b) Frequently
- c) Occasionally
- d) Rarely
- e) Never/Not applicable

Polling Question

How confident are you in your communication techniques to motivate patients?

- a) Very confident
- b) Somewhat confident
- c) Somewhat unconfident
- d) Not confident at all



Motivational Interviewing: How and Why to Collaborate with Patients

Mallori DeSalle, MA, LMHC, NCC, CCMHC, CHP, CPS-II

Matt Allen, DDS

Sam Wakim, DMD, MPH

The Problem

Most patients say going to the dentist feels like going to the principal's office. They feel judged and tune out. If instruction alone worked, would we still see the same caries and perio patterns year after year?



Objectives and Promise



Motivational Interviewing in Dentistry

Introduce the topic of using motivational interviewing techniques in dental settings



Why Collaboration Works

Explain how a collaborative approach can improve patient engagement and outcomes



How to Start Tomorrow

Provide practical steps for implementation

This webinar will provide an introduction to motivational interviewing in dentistry, highlighting why a collaborative approach works and offering concrete steps to get started tomorrow.

What MI Is (in plain language)

Definition

A collaborative way of talking that strengthens a person's own reasons for change.

Essence

Guiding, not persuading.

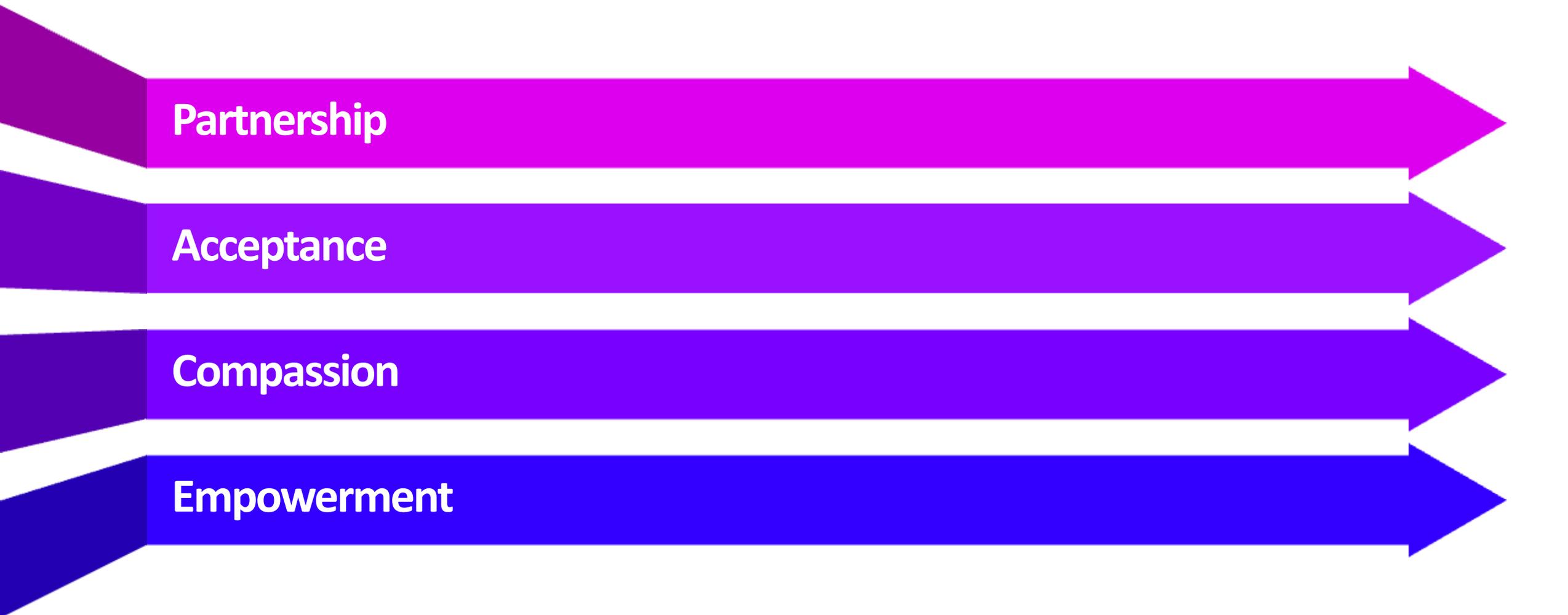
Origins

Developed in addiction therapy in the 80s, now used in oral health to make prevention conversations more effective.

Example

Instead of telling, we explore: "What matters most to you about your smile?"

MI Spirit in a Sentence



Partnership

Acceptance

Compassion

Empowerment

OARS in Dental Language

- **Open Questions**

"What matters most for us to talk about today?"

- **Affirmations**

"You've built a solid brushing habit."

- **Reflections**

"Evenings can get hectic and you're doing your best."

- **Summaries**

"Just to make sure we're tracking: consistency is tough, you've found some successes, and you're ready to make small changes."

Change Talk vs. Sustain Talk

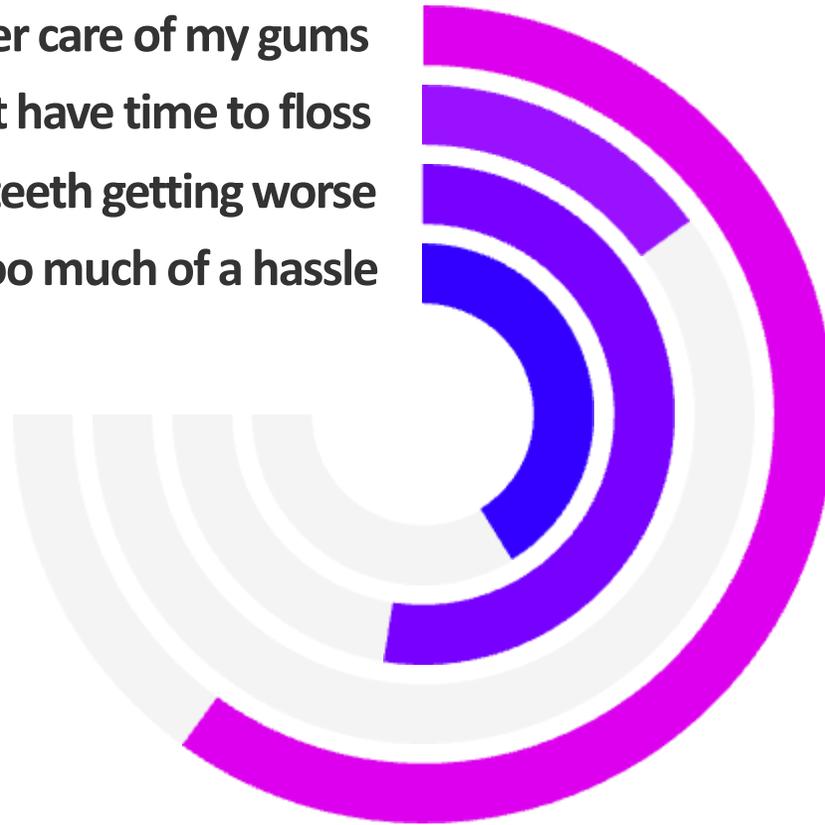
Comparison of signs of readiness to change (Change Talk) vs. reasons to stay the same (Sustain Talk)

I really want to take better care of my gums

I just don't have time to floss

I'm worried about my teeth getting worse

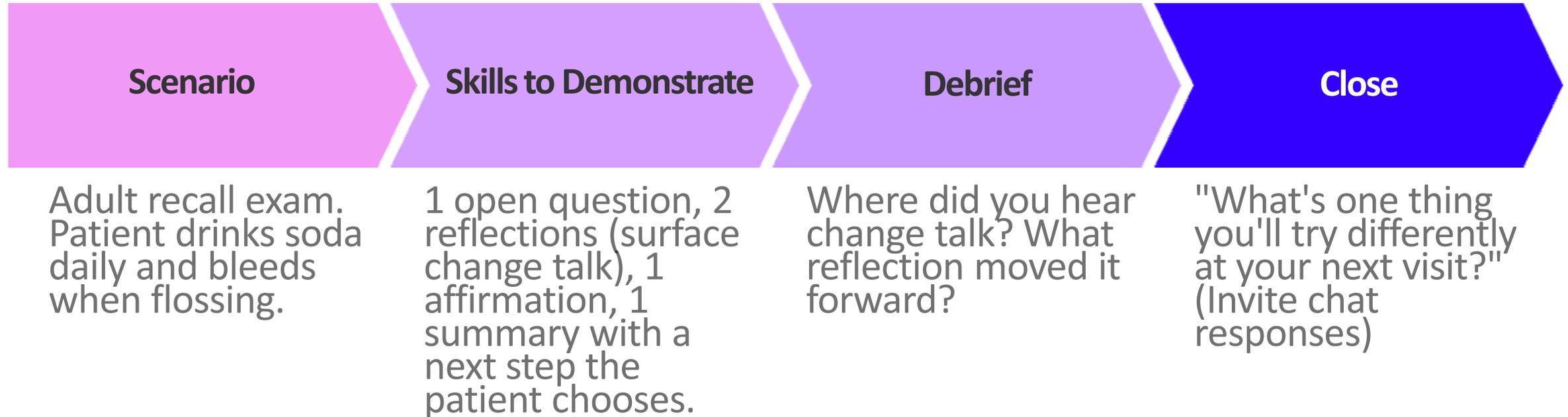
Brushing is too much of a hassle



Business as Usual vs. MI — Fix and Flip

Business as Usual	MI Flip
Do you floss every day?	What does taking care of your gums look like for you right now?
You really need to cut the soda.	What role do sweet drinks play in your day, and what change, if any, feels doable?
Is anything bothering you today?	What matters most for us to talk about today?
Good job brushing, but you missed along the gumline.	You've built a solid brushing habit. Where do you see room for a small upgrade?
Insurance won't cover that.	Would it help to look at options so you can decide what fits your goals and budget?

Make It Real — Role Play and One Next Step



Try It Tomorrow



Ask: "What matters most for us to talk about today?"

Start the conversation by understanding what's most important to the patient.



Replace one yes/no check with an open-ended question.

Use an open question instead of a close-ended question to encourage patient engagement.



Aim for 1 reflection.

Focus on listening and reflecting more than asking questions to create a collaborative dialogue.

With these simple steps, you can start applying motivational interviewing techniques to make your dental conversations more human-centered and effective.

Resources

[1. Caries Risk Conversation](#)

[2. Shared Decision Making in Oral Health](#)

[3. MI In Dentistry Video Series](#)



By fostering collaboration and empowering patients to identify their own reasons for change, motivational interviewing can transform dental conversations and lead to more sustainable oral health outcomes.

***Let's make dental care more human
- one conversation at a time.***



Thank You to Our Speakers



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accessible,
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