

Empowering Youth to Make Healthy Decisions

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3:00 p.m. – 4:30 pm ET



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Family and Youth Services Bureau
Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)

Presenters

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Power To Decide

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Resources for Resolving Violence, Inc.

This information fits into your work through...

- Progression toward the end goal of healthy and prepared youth
- Use of strategies congruent with Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) and Adult Preparation Subjects (APS) requirements
- Teaching and supporting youth to practice self-regulation, which is the capacity to formulate a plan of one's own and implement the behavior to carry it out
- Universal application for all grantees regardless of adolescent pregnancy prevention (APP) funding streams to promote warm, nonjudgmental, empathic, and genuine interaction that promotes optimal decision-making for youth

Learning Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- clarify evidence to effectively engage youth in services;
- use trauma-informed strategies for self-regulation to promote program involvement; and
- learn strategies to motivate or empower youth to consider and practice behaviors to support health and well-being.

Warm-up

- Thinking about your program:
 - Please identify one way that your program empowers youth to make healthy decisions
 - Write your answers in the chat box



What's in it for you

- Empirically driven interactions to enhance positive youth development
- No need to have any answers
- Streamlined service delivery
- More fun (says who?)
- Less stress (really? in whose world?)

As you participate in this webinar, please think of any youth with whom it has been challenging to engage or with whom your educators/facilitators have expressed difficulties

Keep them in mind as we go through the information

Neuroscience indicates that humans thrive in settings that...

- Are calm and soothing
- Promote optimal development
- Provide a variety of stimulating, engaging, and increasingly challenging experiences with enough repetition to solidify desired outcomes
- Reward prosocial behavior
- Respond to people's needs with flexibility
- Allow for mistakes and poor judgment to be self-corrected with support and encouragement

STEINBURG, 2014; VAN DER KOLK, 2014

Neuroscience made easy

- Kindness
- Motivation
- Self-Regulation
- Optimal decision-making
- Habit



Kindness knows no shame

STEVIE WONDER

Creating a culture of kindness

- Smile and look each youth in the eye every time you see them
- Say their name in a warm and compassionate way
- Shake their hand or give them a fist bump
- Find out what they are interested in and talk about those things with them



A kind face or soothing tone of voice
can dramatically alter the way we feel

Focused attunement with others can shift
us out of disorganized and fearful states

VAN DER KOLK, 2014

Saying a person's first name in a gentle and soothing manner has been shown to help de-escalation

Practicing calm, competent, and confident interaction can reduce stress hormones

STEINBERG, 2014; VAN DER KOLK, 2014

I've learned that people will forget
what you said, people will forget
what you did, but people will never
forget how you made them feel.

MAYA ANGELOU

How do you want people to feel after their time with you?

Please write your answer in the chat box

Instill hope and optimism

Express an honest belief in a person's abilities

Are you consistently warm, nonjudgmental, empathic, and genuine?

DUNKIN, MILLER, WAMPOLD, & HUBBLE, 2011

Create an atmosphere
of warmth and acceptance

Ride the wave of sustain talk

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

When given the choice between
being right and being kind,
choose kindness

DR. WAYNE W. DYER (FROM THE MOVIE, *WONDER*)

Be kind, for everyone you meet is
fighting a hard battle

IAN MACLAREN



Now let's think about
motivation

I'm always thinking about what motivates me...

And I'd like you to think about what motivates you...



Because it begins with us

Motivational interviewing is a *collaborative conversation* style for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013



Why motivational interviewing?

Coding data indicate that many people who think they are using motivational interviewing are not practicing core components of the model

What's up with that?

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Motivational interviewing is as much
about what not to say and do

As it is about what to say and do

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

What barriers diminish potential for engagement?

PLEASE IDENTIFY
BARRIERS YOU
EXPERIENCE IN THE
CHAT BOX



10 really bad things to say when empowering youth...

- You need to
- Calm down
- Suck it up
- Get a grip
- Man up
- Here's what we're gonna do
- That's inappropriate
- How many times do I have to tell you
- I'm not putting up with this
- You will not disrespect me!

10 really bad things to do when empowering youth...

- Avoid greeting others
- Ignore someone who is trying to communicate with you
- Communicate with your back to others
- Interrupt when another person is talking
- Interrupt other people in conversation
- Look away
- Roll your eyes
- Raise your voice in anger or frustration
- Diminish or demean others
- Behave impatiently

Pressuring people to change or problem solving prematurely results in discord instead of change

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

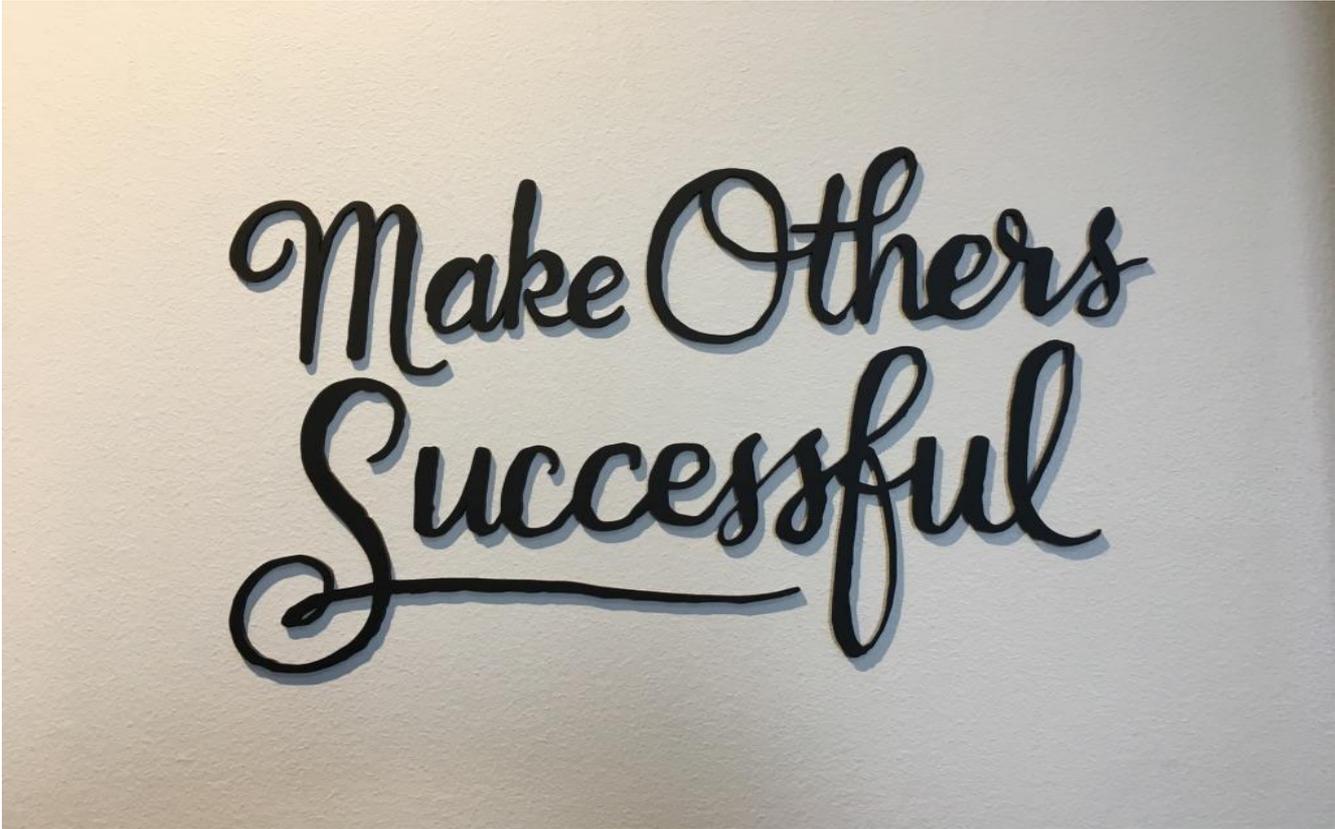
In other words, if you try to do too much too soon your efforts are likely to backfire

The righting reflex refers to “a built-in desire to set things right”

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Directly correcting people also leads to discord rather than change

Let's explore solutions for overcoming such barriers



Make Others
Successful

Even if we are motivated to use motivational interviewing, how do we prevent ourselves from defaulting to old ways?

What successful strategies have you used?

Please write your responses in the chat box

A few strategies for grantees

- **Ask, don't tell:** Remind yourself to ask questions, don't tell youth what to do.
- **Practice open ended questions:** "Tell me more." "What's up with that?" "What are your thoughts about that?" "Go on." "How can I help?"
- **Embrace discord:** Take a deep breath, remind yourself that it's most likely not about you, and encourage them to talk about it.
- **Project a calm, competent, and confident demeanor:** It can help youth feel safe and secure, and lower their stress hormones.
- **Be creative:** Consider how you might use humor, compassion, or goofiness to make a point

Everyone wants someone to understand, listen, and believe they have something worthwhile to say

People are more influenced by what they say rather than what others say to them

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Think of a time when you experienced discord or ambivalence

Miller & Rollnick, 2013



Meeting Santa is supposed to be joyful and exciting, yet is often terrifying for young children

Now imagine a helper who...

- Tells you how much you need to make this change
- Gives you a list of reasons for doing so
- Emphasizes the importance of changing
- Tells you how to do it
- Assures you that you can do it
- Exhorts you to get on with it

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Is that empowering?

Let's try it again...



Now imagine a helper who asks you...

- How would you want to make this change?
- How might you go about it in order to succeed?
- What are the best reasons to do it?
- What are the best reasons to not do it?
- How important is it for you to make this change, and why?

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

This person listens patiently, gives you a short summary of what you have said, then asks one more question...

What Do You Think You Might Do?

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Which would you rather spend your time working with?

Angry, defensive, uncomfortable, and passive
people who don't like you

Or people who feel engaged, empowered, open,
understanding, and rather like their time with you

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2016

They are the same people

The difference is in the dynamics of the conversation

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2016

Let us not underestimate how hard it is to be compassionate.

Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to a place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely, and broken.

This is not our spontaneous response to suffering. What we desire most is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it or finding a quick cure for it.

HENRI NOUWEN

Motivational interviewing is like dancing rather than wrestling

One moves with rather than against another person

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

An empowering and motivating dance

- Ask permission
- Inquire about what's important to them
- Use visual tools
- Resist filling silence immediately
- Evoke and elicit reasons for, and concerns about, change rather than imparting unsolicited advice

OARS provide a guide for collaborative communication

Open-ended questions

Affirm

Reflect

Summarize

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Using motivational interviewing involves...

- *Engaging* youth in services
- *Focusing* on their strengths to promote autonomy
- *Evoking* youth to identify their own values and goals
- Helping them create a *plan* for success

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Now let's bring self-regulation into
the mix

Self-regulation is the capacity to formulate a plan of one's own and implement behavior to carry it out Miller & Rollnick, 2013

The capacity for *self-regulation* is probably the single most important contributor to achievement, mental health, and social success

STEINBERG, 2014

Using self-regulation to enhance engagement

Arousal: to evoke or awaken a feeling, emotion, or response

Disturbance of arousal: an experience that tests our ability to manage feelings without causing harm

Dysregulation: managing emotions in ways that cause harm to self, others, or both

Embracing ambivalence (*I want to and I don't want to*) is vital for both empowering and motivating youth as it recognizes universal human experience

How would you go about it if you were ready?

Everyone is telling you what needs to change. What do you want?

What parts of your life aren't working for you right now?

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Regulation flowchart

Getting Upset and Feeling Out of Control



Most promising efforts to promote self-regulation

- Activities to improve executive functioning (working memory, analysis and synthesis, organizational skills, internal speech, emotional and behavioral regulation)
- Mindfulness practice
- Exercise
- Activities that require intense concentration
- Strategies to boost self-control and strengthen the ability to delay gratification

STEINBERG, 2104; VAN DER KOLK, 2014

Addressing discord

- Stop, pause, and consider the situation
- Drop your current approach
- Express your understanding of the situation
- If you were to consider saying something kind, what might that be?

MILLER & ROLLNICK, 2013

Being *warm, nonjudgmental, empathic, and genuine* is the most direct route to change (influencing optimal decision making in youth)

DUNCAN, MILLER, WAMPOLD, & HUBBLE, 2011

Education *does not* equal change

Practice does

Its not enough to provide information;
we must help them integrate what they
learn into meaningful practice

Our brain must engage, organize, and integrate
information in order to shift what we learn from
working to long-term memory

DEBRA CHRISTOPHER

Effective programs include activities that are

- Sequenced
- Active
- Focused
- Stimulating
- Scaffolded (demanding, but not so much that they overwhelm capacity)
- Sustained through practice

STEINBERG, 2014; VAN DER KOLK, 2014

In Summary

When we engage youth through *kindness* and *motivational interviewing*, while modeling and teaching *self-regulation* and *optimal decision-making*, we can all end up changing *habits* to experience better health and well-being

In Summary

- **Empowering youth to make healthy decisions involves:**
 - Engaging, accepting, and welcoming all youth at all times (particularly when you don't feel like it!)
 - Implementing a trauma-informed approach
 - Promoting positive youth development
 - Using pragmatic interventions
 - Promoting and modeling health and well-being for everyone involved
 - Taking good care of yourself!

Please remember

Strategies for empowering youth can be as simple as remembering to smile, make eye contact, and being warm, nonjudgmental, empathic, and genuine

Motivating young people is about patiently listening and asking encouraging questions rather than telling them what to do

Everyone can easily practice self-regulation by slowing down; taking deep breathes; using body movement; and expression through art, drama, dance, and music

All of these things promote optimal decision-making that changes neuro-processing and creates habits for life-long health and well-being



AT 18 MILES
YOU WONDER WHY YOU DO THIS.

— AT 26.2 —

IT ALL BECOMES PERFECTLY CLEAR.

ING  NEW YORK CITY MARATHON | 2004 |  OFFICIAL SPONSOR
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Questions?

Resources and Citations

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