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Professional Development
International Conference on Motivational Interviewing
June 18 - 21, 2017; Philadelphia, PA

Brief description of conference activities and how this impacts student learning and success at UHMC:

Implementation Science and Motivational Interviewing

This session focused on research related to working with agencies to develop plan for sustainment of Motivational Interviewing (MI) into ongoing staff skills and activities after MI training. Points of intervention for sustainment include:

- 1) Details of the expectations of the funder of the agency programs,
- 2) Vision of the agency and how MI fits this.
- 3) Identification of the agency 'team' that will be responsible for implementation including administrators, supervisors and staff.
- 4) Incentives for these team members to put forth the effort to sustain MI.
- 5) Consideration to the relationship between the clinical supervision and client outcomes when considering fidelity of MI.
- 6) Use of client feedback and other quality assurance methods.

This session was particularly relevant in relation to how to support ongoing use fo MI after the class or workshop has ended..

MI and Self-Compassion Approaches

This was a great workshop focusing on how to encourage self-care, specifically self-compassion; that might be client self-compassion, caseworker/counselor self-compassion, student or teacher self-compassion. Mindfulness activities were introduced.

I teach emotional regulation activities in my classes and this workshop gave me additional insights and tools for doing so.

"Change Talk"

This session focused on the research, past and present, that indicates that eliciting client conversation about change, change talk, leads to preparation for and commitment to change.

This session reinforced the teaching strategies and activities that I use.

MI Supervision

This session focused on the research related to the use of observation and feedback, live supervision, in teaching MI. There were discussions of the use of video technology in addition to face-to-face observations.

It has been challenging to offer the Motivational Interviewing course at UHMC to outer island sites. This workshop presented information on the efficacy as well as the challenges of doing so.

MI and Communication Science

This session was a wonderful opportunity to hear the developer of MI discuss the history of practice and research that led to the current practice, training and teaching of MI.

This session gave me 'nuggets' of the history of MI that I can use in my classes as I teach the attitudes, skills and knowledge of this evidence based approach to counseling. For example, the presenter talked about the expansion of MI beyond human services into health care and education. This is significant for the efforts in the Human Services Program at UHMC.

MI in Groups

Each of these presenters shared information with projects and research that is occurring in relation to group work with teachers, vets and clients with dual diagnosis. This discussion demonstrated the ways in which they integrated implementation science into their efforts, the benefits and challenges of doing so. These presenters are doing exciting and inspirational work in their communities. Their research is expanding the horizons of MI in communities.

I teach a group counseling course and this workshop gave me ideas about how MI might be further integrated into this class, for example, in the teaching of communication skills..

Theory – MI and Persuasion: Opposites of Overlapping Forms of Influence?

This session explored a continuum related to MI and Persuasion. Questions included: Does persuasion mean selling something (convincing someone to...); if so, then MI is not persuasive. If persuasion means starting where the client (student) is, being non-judgmental, crafting language to encourage change, helping people critically think and avoiding provoking defensiveness, then, yes, MI is persuasive. This has long been an ethical concern for MI theoreticians, researchers, trainers, teachers and practitioners. Research evidence demonstrates that part of the effectiveness of MI is a respect for the autonomy of the client (student, etc.). At the same time, skillful use of MI can guide people to new perspectives, decisions and behaviors that 'we' may wish also for them. Ethical practice requires that we continually ask ourselves questions about whether we are using MI to persuade or for spoken interests of the client/student. The cultural context when doing MI, that is, the appropriateness for MI in collectivistic cultures where autonomy may not be the highest value, was also considered. An 'external ethical framework' for further exploring the issues of persuasion was encouraged.

I have long been aware of the ethical issues when using or teaching MI. This session helped to expand my understanding of the issues of persuasion, influence, compassion, autonomy, culture, etc.

Description of how this knowledge and experiences will be shared:

Building on aspects of this conference that were significant to me, I am designing weekly homework assignments that will provide guided practice for student use of MI so that students or training participants begin to apply MI outside the classroom. This will encourage sustainability of MI beyond the academic setting.

I have included a class session on self-care as part of my counseling courses. I plan to shift this and infuse self-care weekly via emotional regulation and other compassion activities. This makes it not a 'topic' but a practiced activity that might help students to perform better in the class (for example during role-play or testing situations) as well extend outside the classroom in their career in human services.

Through the Professional Development office at UHMC I have been contracted to provide MI training to faculty and staff. Training sessions are being planned for the fall with UHMC counselors and others. A 'two session' format for faculty training will allow for the inclusion of outside 'practice' activities that might encourage increased sustainability of MI by those attendees. And, self-care/compassion will be part of the training.

I feel privileged to be part of the MI community and to have had the support of UHMC to attend this conference. The conference 'nourished' me in multiple ways and enabled me to bring my growth and understanding back to my work at the college.