Behavior Change Counseling: Training Graduate Dietetic Students in Shortened Motivational Interviewing

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INTRODUCTION

Objective: Motivational interviewing is a client centered approach that elicits behavior change from within. A shortened method, Behavior Change Counseling, is often used in lifestyle changes in the clinical setting.

Study Design: Graduate dietetic students were counselors as part of a fruit and vegetable intervention and were assessed for adherence to behavior change counseling. The counselors (n=5) were doctoral students in dietetics at West Virginia University and n=2 held registered dietitian (RD) licensure. Counselors were female with average counseling experience of one year (0.8±1.3), with two counselors having no previous counseling experience. Each counselor was assigned one intervention participants to counsel based on schedule, with each counselor having at least one participant and no more than 3 participants.

Counselors were first trained across two consecutive days on motivational interviewing techniques by a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT). Training tactics included lecture, role play and teach backs. Following training, counselors completed the Shortened Motivational Interviewing for Fruits and Vegetables intervention where they met with subjects weekly. Counseling sessions were audio recorded with client consent and minutes and audio recorded with client consent.

RESULTS

A shortened method, Behavior Change Counseling, is often used in lifestyle changes in the clinical setting.

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CONCLUSIONS

These findings indicate that graduate dietetic students were already using motivational interviewing techniques as part of their counseling sessions but did show slight improvements, especially in those with low counseling experience.

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