



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

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Motivational interviewing is a client centered approach that works to elicit 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 hold 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 intervention participants to counsel based on schedule, with each counselor having at least one participant and no more than 10 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 8-week fruit and vegetable intervention where they met with subjects weekly. Counseling sessions were audio recorded with permission from subjects. To measure adherence and improvements in behavior change counseling, baseline (week 2) and post (week 8), audio tapes were randomly selected and coded using the Behavior Change Counseling Index (BECCI) by three independent raters. BECCI contains eleven, five-point Likert-scaled items that ranks counselor's motivational interviewing techniques (0-not at all, 1-minimally, 2-to some extent, 3-a good deal, 4-a great extent). All raters underwent a brief training on motivational interviewing and watched a training video on health behavior change. The raters completed one counselling session together to ensure reliability between raters, with results showing interrater reliability .20 points of one another.

Results: Results showed that on average counselors used motivational interviewing techniques a good deal of the time at baseline (t0=2.71) and improved slightly to post (t1=2.75) yet did not reach significant improvements for overall score (p=0.87). Counselors with limited counseling experience at baseline showed greater improvements over time (t0=2.63; t1=2.83; p=0.29).

Conclusion: 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.

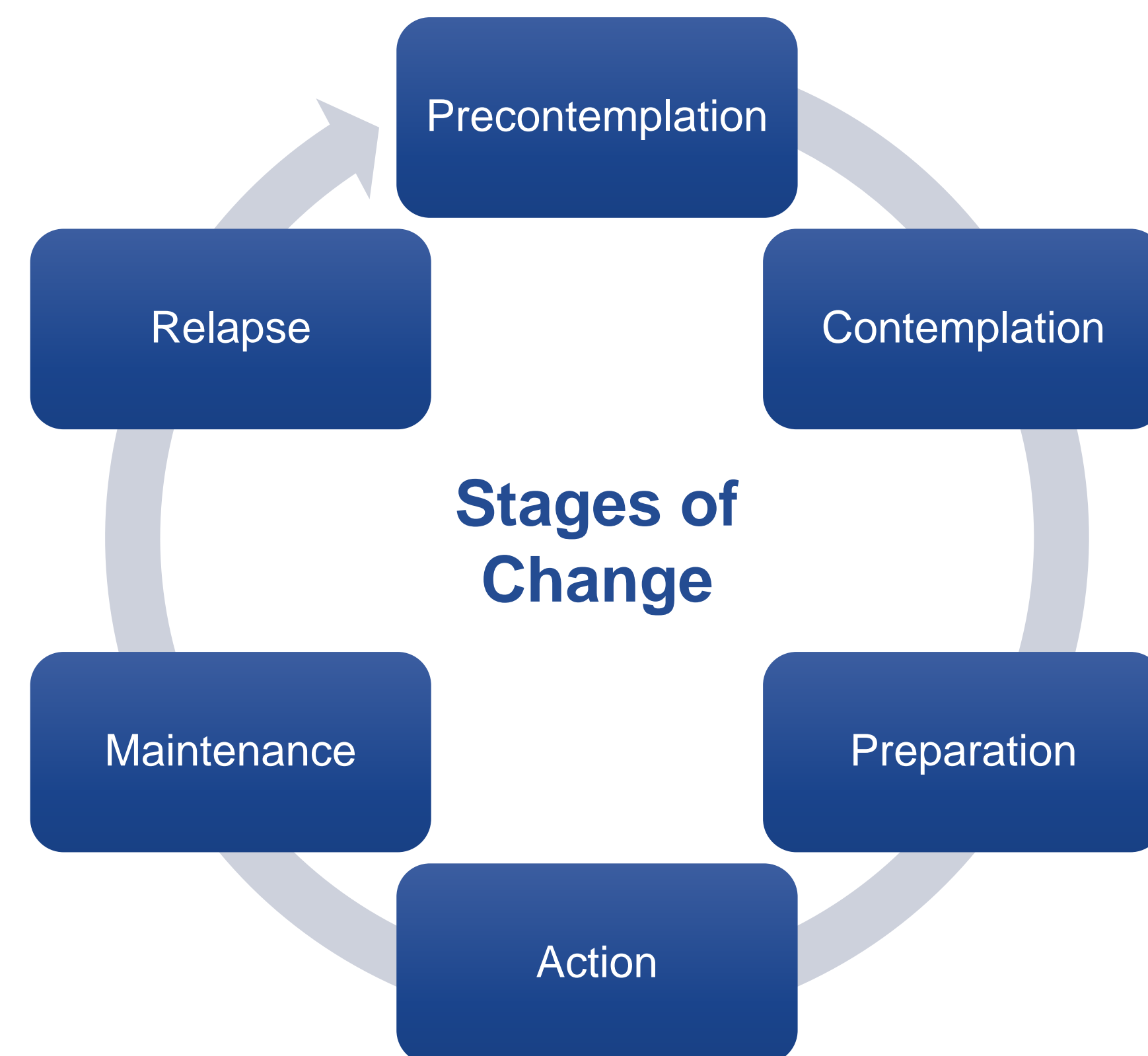
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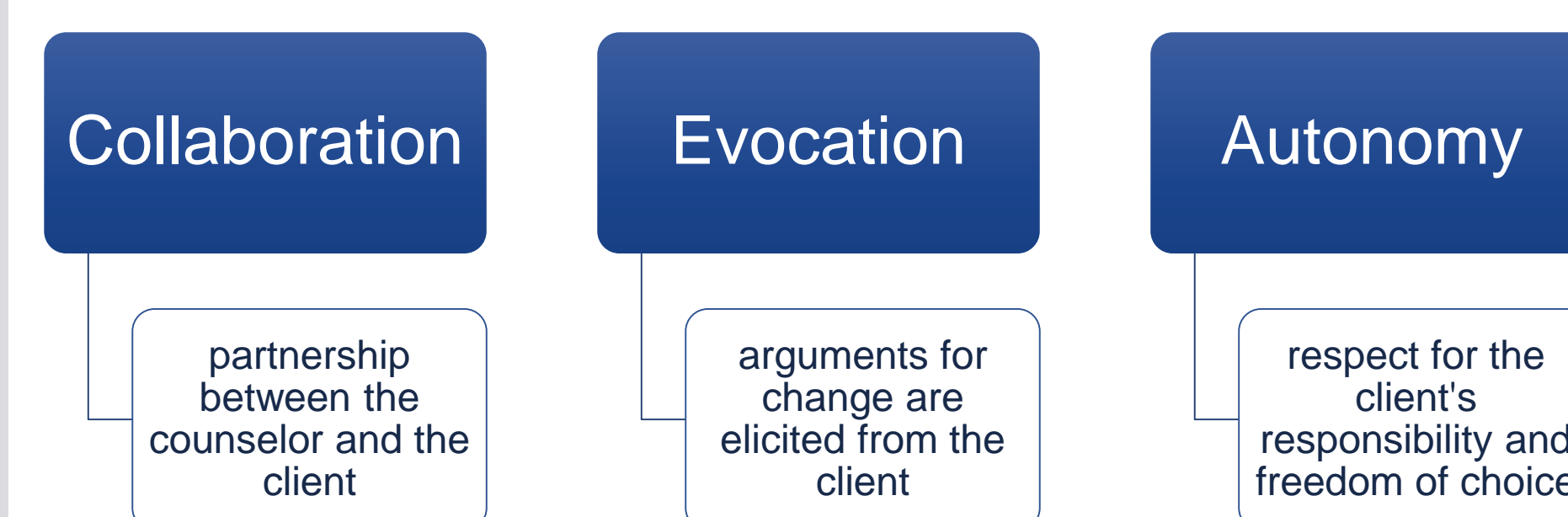


INTRODUCTION

- Motivational interviewing is a client centered approach that elicits behavior change from within
- Utilizes the Stages of Change framework to guide clients to overcome ambivalence



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



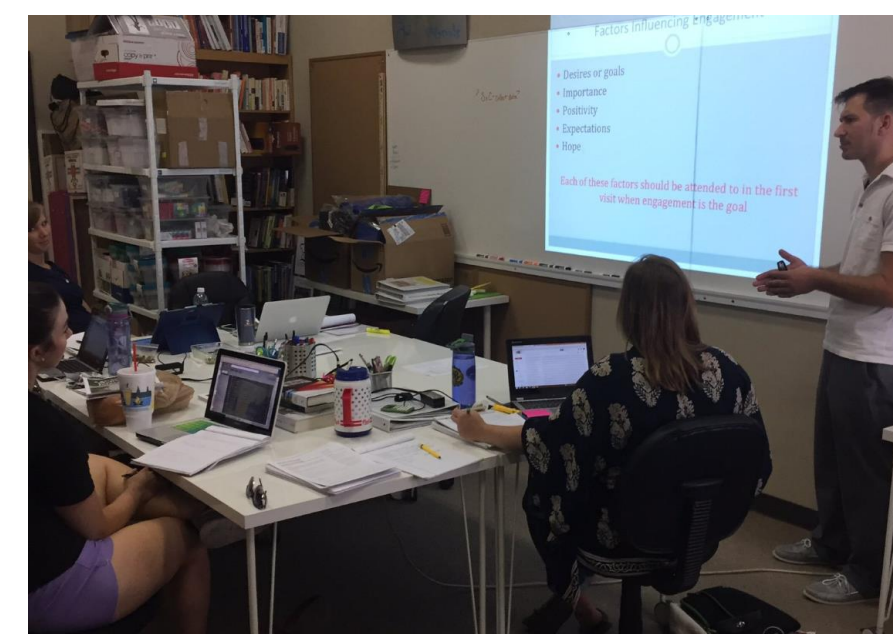
- Counselor adherence to Behavior Change Counseling is measured using the Behavior Change Counseling Index (BECCI)

Sample BECCI Score Sheet

Item	Score
1. Practitioner invites the patient to talk about behaviour change	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
2. Practitioner demonstrates sensitivity to talking about other issues	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
3. Practitioner encourages patient to talk about current behaviour or status quo	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
4. Practitioner encourages patient to talk about change	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
5. Practitioner asks questions to elicit how patient thinks and feels about the topic	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
6. Practitioner uses empathic listening statements when the patient talks about the topic	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
7. Practitioner uses summaries to bring together what the patient says about the topic	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
8. Practitioner acknowledges challenges about behaviour change that the patient faces	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
9. When practitioner provides information, it is sensitive to patient concerns and understanding	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
10. Practitioner actively conveys respect for patient choice about behaviour change	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent
11. Practitioner and patient exchange ideas about how the patient could change current behaviour (if applicable)	not at all 0 1 2 3 4 a great extent

Practitioner BECCI Score: _____
Practitioner speaks for (approximately):-
More than half the time About half the time Less than half the time

METHODS



- Trained by member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT)



- Training tactics included lecture, role play and teach backs

Intervention
Counselors were trained as part of a 8 week fruit and vegetable intervention

Counselor Assignment
Each counselor was randomly assigned participants, ranging from 1-10 clients

Counseling Sessions
Counseling sessions ranged from 30-60 minutes and audio recorded with client consent

Reviewer Training
Reviewers completed interrater reliability (IRR) on one counseling session (IRR=0.80)

Data Analysis
Data analyzed using BECCI by three independent reviewers

RESULTS

- Counselors (n=5) were doctoral students in dietetics at West Virginia University and n=2 hold 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
- Results showed that on average counselors used motivational interviewing techniques a good deal of the time at baseline (t0=2.71) and improved slightly to post (t1=2.75) yet did not reach significant improvements for overall score (p=0.87)
- Counselors with limited counseling experience at baseline showed greater improvements over time (t0=2.63; t1=2.83; p=0.29)

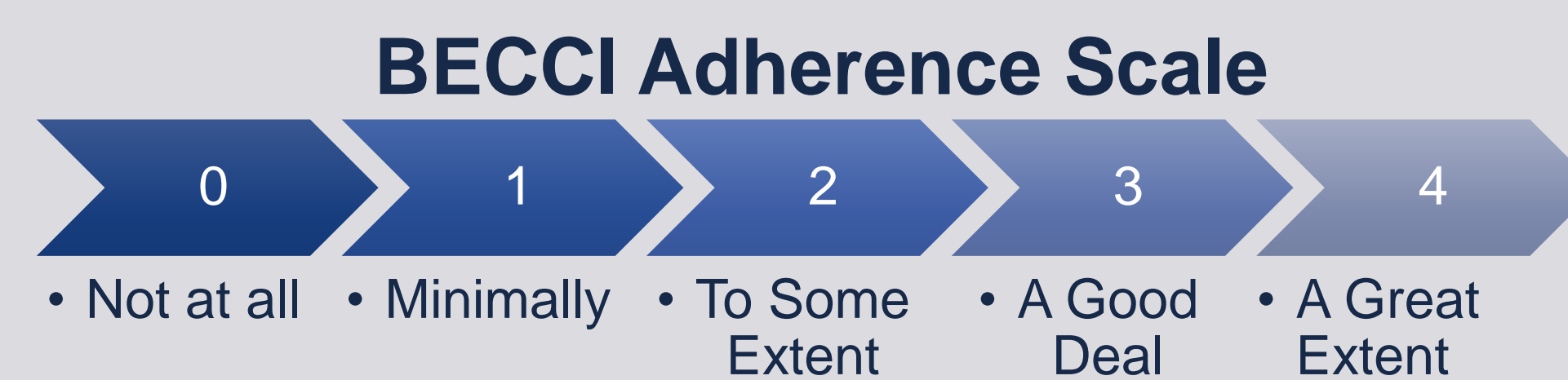


Table 1. Counselor Change Across 8 Weeks

	Baseline	Post	Change
Counselor 1*	3.42	3.08	-0.34
Counselor 2*	1.89	2.12	+0.23
Counselor 3*	2.97	2.91	-0.06
Counselor 4	2.52	2.94	+0.42
Counselor 5	2.73	2.73	0
Average	2.71	2.77	-0.06



DISCUSSION

- 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.
- Training counselors to implement behavior change counseling during health interventions allows participants to elicit internal motivators to better outcomes.
- More research is needed to determine if behavior change counseling techniques improved the outcomes of the participants in the fruit and vegetable intervention.



CONCLUSIONS

- Behavior Change Counseling can be easily integrated into graduate education to improve counseling skills.
- Future health interventions should consider implementation of a motivational interviewing curriculum for counselors.

