

Treatment programs in the Swedish Prison and Probation Service

The aim of the Swedish Prison and Probation service is to only implement evidence based treatment programs.

In order to secure effectiveness the programs shall be reviewed by a scientific panel and only programs fulfilling the requirements will be granted accreditation. To be approved a program must among other things include

- A clear model of change, based on scientific evidence
- Use of effective methods
- Site accreditation, including monitoring of implementation and staff competence

Before applying for accreditation the program is usually tried out in a limited extent during development. After accreditation the aim is to offer the program to all offenders, according to assessed risk and needs.

The following programs are now in use

General offending programs

Breaking with crime (A)
Cognitive Skills (A)
One to one (A)
Enhanced thinking skills (D)
Aggression replacement training - Prepare (D)

Violence

Aggression replacement training (A)
Integrated domestic abuse programme (A)
Violence prevention program (D)

Substance abuse programs

Offender substance abuse prerelease program (A)
Programme for reducing individual substance misuse (A)
Twelve step program (D)
Relapse prevention program (D)

Sexual offending program

The Swedish national sex offender treatment program (A)

Motivational programs

Behavior – talk – change (based on Motivational Interviewing) (A)
Win (specially designed for women) (D)

A-Accredited

D - During development



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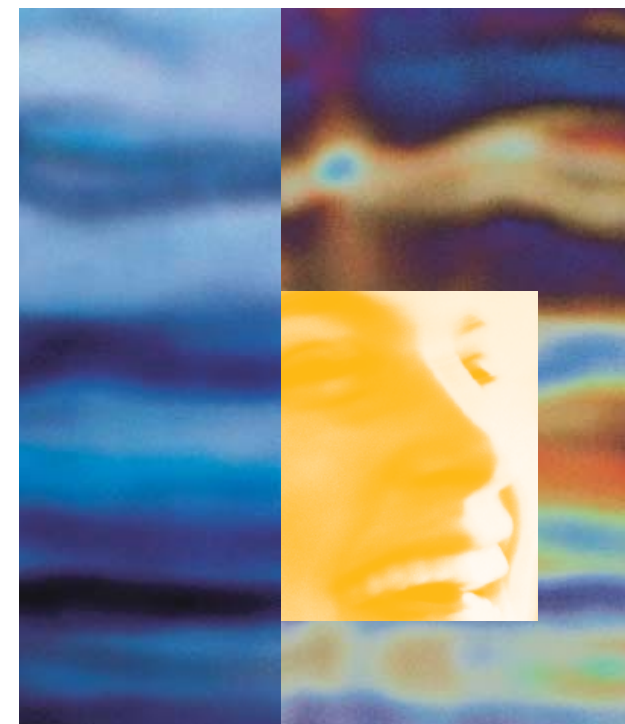


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Treatment Program

Behaviour- Interviewing-Change (BSF)



MI - Motivational Interviewing

MI is a client centred and directive method for helping people to engender change that they believe is essential. In criminal justice in Sweden MI is being used to help clients to reduce probability of relapse in drugs and/or criminal behaviour per se, by increasing their readiness to change but also to increase adherence and retention in other programmes.

Motivation according to MI theory is not a quality or personality trait inherent in clients but an aspect of conditions and circumstances around the client and importantly the relationship to the counsellor. Motivation is something that can be influenced by the counsellor and hence a task to be focused upon. Change will occur within the clients' reference of frame and views or decisions about change must not be forced upon clients.

The method was developed by professor William R. Miller, of the university of New Mexico and later in collaboration with professor Steve Rollnick at the university of Wales. The first book on MI appeared in 1991 and the second edition in 2002. The method has substantial empirical support and more than 100 empirical studies are now published every year.

MI has proven particularly effective in areas of alcoholism, drug misuse but also in areas relating to health and life style. The mechanisms for change are the same regardless of the target for change. Research has shown that MI alone can produce effects similar to other effective interventions but typically effects from all interventions (even MI) fade one year after the

interventions have ended. Meta analyses now reveal that effect sizes are highest and lasting if MI is combined with other interventions.

Most other programmes in Swedish prison and probation rely on social skills building, problem solving, cognitive restructuring and manuals are typically based on the concept that these skills must be taught to clients. MI takes a different position and focuses on increasing the clients' desire to change. The underpinning theory is that clients are more influenced by what they say themselves than what other people are telling them; telling tends to develop resistance which empirically correlates with failure. The MI counsellor helps the client to explore his/her situation, tries to increase emotional discrepancy between current life style and a more advantageous alternative and then continues to elicit change talk. There is empirical evidence that change talk predicts behaviour change and eliciting change talk can be described as the home beacon and compass direction of all MI. Applying this knowledge is unique for MI and is not found in other interventions. Apart from change talk and resistance also empathy has strong predictive power in MI. MI can be defined as an approximation of - if not completely encompassing - the common factors known to explain more of the variance of change than specific methodological factors.

Virtually all staff in Swedish prison and probation completed three-day workshops in MI during 2001-2003. However, the effects from education in MI, also shown by Miller in a randomized study (EM-MEE-study, 2003), are generally not discernible in actual counselling behaviour.

Behaviour-Interviewing-Change (BSF) - learning by doing

Since MI proved hard to learn from mere workshops a manual was written and presented in May 2003 to help practitioners learn necessary skills by doing them in practice with clients and having feedback on their practice. The manual is an application of MI in five semi structured sessions and in total a driver's guide through the entire MI landscape. The aims are twofold:

1. increase practitioner skills
2. increase probability of influencing clients to change by going through the manual

Clients work their way through the manual in a workbook that they are allowed to keep after the programme is finished.

The purpose of the whole programme is to increase motivation and probability for the client to make changes in his/her life style. Skills of MI are defined in behavioural terms and it is imperative that skills be monitored, coached and fed back in a positive tone to counsellors. Implementation of the manual is being upheld by an extensive network of peer review groups all over Sweden and a system for certification. Counsellors audio tape their sessions and the tapes are monitored and compared to an integrity index of 16 dimensions to decide whether MI has been performed well and what dimensions could be suggested for improvement.

It is recommended that the programme be used as an overture to longer behavioural and cognitive programmes but it can also be used as a stand alone intervention for clients who already possess necessary skills.

Pre and post tests from the 2004-2005 population show highly significant improvements from pre- to post tests on motivational scales. Randomised research of the implementation will be completed during 2007.