12-12-2018

Evaluation of Confidence Using Motivational Interviewing Skills Before and After In-Person Training Workshop

Jeni E. Lansing
Iowa State University, jenil@iastate.edu

Kathryn J. DeShaw
Iowa State University, kjsouth@iastate.edu

Maria Perez
Iowa State University, mperez@iastate.edu

Gregory Welk
Iowa State University, gwelk@iastate.edu

Laura D. Ellingson
Iowa State University, ellingl@iastate.edu

Recommended Citation

Evaluation of Confidence Using Motivational Interviewing Skills Before and After In-Person Training Workshop

Abstract

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a skill used to help individuals make positive behavior changes and may be beneficial for those who work with undergraduate students. A new training, comprised of online content followed by an in-person workshop, was created and offered to staff members working directly with students at Iowa State University. The aim of this study was to evaluate confidence for using MI-related components pre and post an in-person workshop. To do so, participants completed a survey regarding their confidence in using MI-related skills before and after the workshop. From the survey results, a paired t-test was conducted to examine differences, and effect size was calculated to examine the magnitude of this difference. A significant difference was found pre to post with a small-to-moderate effect size, suggesting the in-person workshop was an important component for building self-efficacy to implement principles of MI in future conversations with students.

Disciplines
Educational Methods | Online and Distance Education

EVALUATION OF CONFIDENCE USING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING SKILLS BEFORE AND AFTER IN-PERSON TRAINING WORKSHOP

Lansing, J.E., DeShaw, K.J., Perez, M., Welk, G.J., Ellingson, L.D.

ABSTRACT

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a skill used to help individuals make positive behavior changes and may be beneficial for those who work with undergraduate students. A new training, comprised of online content followed by an in-person workshop, was created and offered to staff members working directly with students at Iowa State University. The aim of this study was to evaluate confidence for using MI-related components pre and post an in-person workshop. To do so, participants completed a survey regarding their confidence in using MI-related skills before and after the workshop. From the survey results, a paired t-test was conducted to examine differences, and effect size was calculated to examine the magnitude of this difference. A significant difference was found pre to post with a small-to-moderate effect size, suggesting the in-person workshop was an important component for building self-efficacy to implement principles of MI in future conversations with students.

BACKGROUND

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a conversation style that helps individuals build intrinsic motivation to make positive behavior changes (Rollnick & Miller, 1995). This method helps create a collaborative, student-focused approach that may be helpful during conversations with ambivalent undergraduate students seeking help with a behavior change (Larussi, 2013). Motivational Interviewing is a highly sought skill for many Student Wellness programs on university campuses due to increasing demand for student services and limited available resources. Formalized training, however, is typically only available through specialized, costly courses and are time-consuming. These barriers create challenges for full-time employees who may benefit from utilizing this skill. A blended training of online content and an in-person workshop was offered to Iowa State staff members. The purpose of this study was to evaluate changes in participants' confidence levels in using MI-related skills before and after the in-person workshop. A secondary aim was to evaluate participant perceptions of the impact the training will have on their future interactions with students.

METHODS

Participants who enrolled in the training completed online content, consisting of weekly lectures, readings, and individual skill-based activities spread out over a 6 week period. They then attended a full day workshop to review key principles and practice job-specific conversations. Participant confidence in using MI-related components was assessed before and after the workshop using a survey designed specifically for the purposes of this study. Participants were asked to rate their confidence using MI skills with a Likert-style scale from "Not Confident" to "Very Confident." The MI skills assessed in the survey were: perceived ability to demonstrate the MI Spirit (autonomy, evocation and collaboration), using foundations of MI (resisting the righting reflex, understanding client motivation, listening, and empowering), using OARS (open-

ended questions, affirmation, reflections, and summaries), focusing a conversation, evoking motivation for change, and planning a goal. A sum of these scores was computed to compare total confidence of MI-related skills pre and post the workshop. Upon completion of the training, participants were also asked to rate the statement "Overall, the workshop has made an impact in how I will interact with students in the future" using a scale from 0 to 6 from "Entirely Disagree" to "Entirely Agree." Survey results were analyzed descriptively (mean ± SD), and a paired t-test was conducted to compare total levels of confidence before and after the in-person workshop. Effect size (Cohen's d) was calculated to examine the magnitude of difference.

RESULTS

Participants were nine campus staff members (age = 32 ± 5; 78% female) who worked regularly with undergraduate students. There was a significant difference ($t = 3.018$ (1), $p = 0.009$) between baseline confidence levels (M= 42.4 ± 6.4) and follow-up confidence levels (M = 56.4 ± 7.9), with a small to medium effect size ($d = 0.30$). Additionally, participants rated the impact they expected training to have on future conversations as "Mostly" to "Strongly Agree" (M= 5.8 ± 0.4).

DISCUSSION

The use of MI by Iowa State University staff members may be beneficial in helping students begin and sustain positive behavior changes, such as improving behaviors related to mental health, physical health, academics, substance abuse/misuse, and misconduct. These preliminary results show that an in-person workshop may be valuable for building self-efficacy for implementing MI skills into daily conversations with students, following an online-based training curriculum. While participants indicated they understood the material after reviewing the online content, they reported more confidence and ability to integrate MI into their work following the workshop. All ratings of impact of the workshop were high and positive, and all individuals indicated they would recommend this training to a co-worker, showing a need for similar trainings in the future. Additionally, this study demonstrates the feasibility of a low contact, self-paced model of MI training that may be useful for individuals working full time who may significantly benefit from using this skill. While confidence in ability to use MI significantly increased, further research is needed to investigate the proficiency of the skill following the brief blended training. Future studies should consider having the instructors code mock conversations of each participant following the training to document proficiency.

REFERENCES

Larussi, M. M. (2013). Examining how motivational interviewing may foster college student development. *Journal of College Counseling*, *16*(2), 158-175.

Rollnick, S., & Miller, W. R. (1995). What is motivational interviewing? *Behavioural and cognitive Psychotherapy*, *23*(4), 325-334.