Motivational Interviewing, the Transtheoretical Model of Change,

and Academic Development

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Abstract

Motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2012) and the transtheoretical model of change (Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClimente, 2007) offer potential considerable benefits to professional school counselors' efforts to promote academic development. We describe how these models can be used by professional school counselors in the provision of what are referred to as responsive services in *the ASCA National Model* (ASCA, 2012), which includes individual counseling, individual student planning, and the indirect services of collaboration and consultation with parents and teachers as they strive to support student academic achievement. We offer two case studies to illustrate the adaptation and employment of the approaches discussed in the paper.

Keywords: school counselor, motivational interviewing, transtheoretical model of change

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Over the past several few decades, the school counseling profession has experienced a transition from a focus on the provision of responsive services to an increased emphasis upon promoting students' academic development. This emphasis has been encouraged and reinforced by the implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2002) and Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In an effort to clearly demonstrate to stakeholders that school counselors are vital contributors to the academic mission of schools, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) collaborated to redefine the school counseling profession to align with the Federal mandates (Education Trust, 2009) . ASCA and TSCI promoted the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program that sought to reduce the achievement gaps related to students' race, gender, or socioeconomic status, with the goal of enabling all students to succeed (ASCA, 2012). In this manuscript, we begin by providing an overview of the techniques of motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2010) and the transtheoretical model of change (Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClimente, 2007), as well as citing the empirical support for the use of these models. We then proceed to describing how school counselors can use these techniques and models when conducting what are referred to as responsive services in the ASCA National Model (2012), including individual counseling and individual student planning, and when consulting with teachers and parents.

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing (MI) is "a collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change" (Miller & Rollnick, 2012, p. 29). Miller and Rollnick (2012) define the central principles of MI as evocation (instilling the desire to change), collaboration (working together), acceptance (unconditional positive regard and empathy), and compassion (actively supporting the other's development). These authors assert that school counselors can employ these principles through the use of empathy, rolling with resistance (avoiding arguments), exposing discrepancies between the student's goals and status of current behaviors, and by supporting the student's self-efficacy towards change.

Motivational interviewing is a technique that enhances a student's intrinsic motivation by exploring his or her self-efficacy and values. This exploration is important with respect to school counseling, as academic self-efficacy has been shown to be a moderate predictor of academic performance (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991). This technique also aligns with the suggestion by researchers that counselors should refrain from using confrontation or pushing the client to change (Dahir & Stone, 2012). Such pressure is often counterproductive, as it may not facilitate movement towards self-directed change. In MI, the counselor seeks to roll with resistance and evokes and supports the student's change talk (i.e., possible disadvantages of maintaining the status quo, advantages of change, hopefulness for change, and desire to change; Miller & Rollnick, 2012). Those who use MI promote the assumption that people are growth oriented and are also often highly ambivalent about changing. Counselors, in following the tenants of MI, provide an environment of support and understanding that helps

students to understand and address their ambivalence and commit to change if they so choose.

Empirical support for the use of MI for academic development. There is more than 30 years of research that supports MI's effectiveness in the treatment of substance abuse, adult mental health issues, and the reduction of risky behavior (e.g., Lundahl, Kunz, Brownell, Tollefson, & Burke, 2010). More recently, because MI allows for brevity and the use of collaborative relationships, researchers have investigated the effectiveness of MI in academic settings. Strait et al. (2012) and Terry, Smith, and McQuillin (2013) found that middle school students who received one individual session of MI exhibited an increase in their math scores, class participation, and positive academic behavior in comparison to students who did not participate in the MI process. In both of the aforementioned studies, the participants completed self-assessments, received support and feedback, and developed a plan for change during their MI session. The researchers concluded that the intervention was successful as it appeared to help students realize that they possessed the resources for achieving their goals.

Terry, Strait, McQuillin, and Smith (2014) investigated the dosage effect of MI, comparing the differential impact between one- and two-sessions of MI. In their study, one group of middle school students received one, 45-minute session of MI provided by a "report card coach." During the session, participants completed optional goal sheets, which were returned to them one week following the session. A second group of students received two-sessions of MI that were identical to that of the students in group one. These students received a performance feedback goal worksheet every 2 weeks between the first and second sessions. The performance goal worksheet listed the

student's stated goal, and had two bar graphs; one depicting current grade point average and the other depicting the student's progress over time. Results showed that participants who completed two sessions of MI: (a) exhibited significantly higher grades in math, history, and science as compared to students who participated in only one session; (b) improved by one half of a letter grade in three out of four classes, increasing their GPA to a B+ from a B; and (c) demonstrated greater gains in affective engagement than the students who participated in one session. Both groups demonstrated significant gains in intrinsic motivation, while neither of the groups exhibited significant gains in self-efficacy, life satisfaction, or behavioral engagement (Terry et al., 2014).

Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Change

Prochaska et al.'s (2007) transtheoretical model (TTM) is often used in conjunction with MI. The TTM uses the stages of change model, in which theorists of the TTM posit that people change through a sequential process, progressing from having no or little commitment to change, to being highly active in maintaining change. The model can be used to describe changes in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that people experience as they seek to modify a behavior, such as quitting smoking or dieting. The six stages of change include: (a) precontemplation, (b) contemplation, (c) preparation, (d) action, (e) maintenance, and (f) termination (Prochaska et al., 2007). An Appendix provides a summary of the six stages of change as developed by Prochaska et al. (2007), and includes an adaptation of the change model to describe students' approach toward improving their academic performance. Within TTM, the counselor connects with students by using helping strategies that are compatible with a particular

stage of readiness (Prochaska et al., 2007). Often, professional helpers err in assuming that individuals who seek assistance are committed to change; TTM is structured to reduce this type of error. People often seek assistance from professional helpers in order to develop insight or gain information, but might not be interested in changing their behaviors. People who are at lower levels of the stages of change require a qualitatively different approach than do those who have already started to engage in changing their behaviors. Later, in this manuscript, we provide a description of how MI techniques and TTM can be used during the various stages of change with students in regard to academic performance.

Empirical support for use of TTM in promoting academic development. Grant and Franklin (2007) found that the use of TTM among first-year college students resulted in increased study skill usage and improved academic self-efficacy. In other research, Jakubowski and Dembo (2004) concluded that the use of TTM resulted in increased self-regulation for college students who were in the contemplation and action stages of change, but the impact on students who were in the precontemplation and maintenance stages was not as clear. O'Brien (2002) established that the use of TTM mediated the relationship between academic procrastination and exam preparation in college students. The efficacy of the use of TTM with college students seems to be clear, although further research is necessary to determine the implications of these studies for primary and secondary students.

Application of MI and TTM for School Counselors

We suggest that counselors infuse MI and TTM in individual counseling, individual student planning, and consultation with parents and teachers in order to

promote students' academic development. Although theorists and researchers in school counseling have increasingly recommended the implementation of a comprehensive-based program that defines school counselors' activities, the use of brief-individual counseling remains an important function of many school counselors. We believe that MI's strengths-based approach and TTM's emphasis upon promoting change from a developmental perspective offer innovative and potentially effective strategies for helping students with academic difficulties.

Use of MI in Individual Counseling

School counselors can conduct MI in one to three individual sessions, which is of benefit because of the oft-limited time to work with students. Because MI is collaborative and conversational in nature, school counselors can use this technique to develop and strengthen students' commitment to change within those limited sessions (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). Through the use of MI, students are more likely to be invested in the process because they lead the conversation and their ideas are used to solve their own problems. Students' ownership of the process is likely to result in increased academic self-efficacy due to their perception of the changes as self-directed.

MI involves 4 processes: engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). In the engagement stage, school counselors clearly indicate to students that they are only interested in exploring what the student wishes to discuss. Once engagement is solidified, the school counselor focuses the student on self-identifying the problem that is most pressing. Once the school counselor and the student have established a problem or goal upon which the student wants to focus, the MI process continues with evoking. Evoking is the process of assisting students in generating

reasons for wanting to change their behaviors. During evoking, school counselors also help students to identify potential solutions, while simultaneously supporting the notion that they have the capacity for pursuing the established goals. Questions that are relevant in the engaging, focusing, and evoking processing include the following:

1. Why do you want to make this change?
2. How might you go about making this change in a way that you will succeed?
3. What are the three best reasons for you to make this change?
4. How important is it for you to make this change, and why?
5. So what do you think you'll do?" (Miller & Rollnick, 2012, p. 11).

Finally, planning involves assisting students in constructing concrete, realistic plans designed to help them achieve their goals. Students' plans can and should be revisited and changed throughout the process, and as new challenges arise in order to help students to maintain continued commitment to the plan. The school counselor must be cognizant of the student's current stage of change, as many students are ambivalent about improving their grades. Further, the school counselor should not assume that students want to improve their grades, and should explore any ambivalence that is directly or indirectly expressed by a student.

Biles and Eakin (2010) delineated the following six MI techniques that school counselors can use to promote students' sense of control and reduce their ambivalence to change. (a) Simple reflection involves understanding and acknowledging the student's emotions, perceptions, and disagreements with the school counselor, which promotes the development of rapport. For example, a student might be extremely upset about unfair teachers and parents "nagging" about failing grades. Through simple

reflection, the school counselor would acknowledge that he or she hears that the student is upset about the parents and teachers acting unfairly. This acknowledgment would demonstrate that the school counselor understands the student's perspective, without necessarily implying that he or she is siding with the student, which could lead to triangulation. (b) Amplified reflection involves reflecting the students' statements back to them with increased intensity, which enables the students to hear their own statements in new ways, allows them to reconsider what they said, and gives them an opportunity to clarify or revise their statements. (c) Shifting focus is designed to deflect the student's perspective from the barriers that are blocking progress to a perspective that may be more productive. In the previous example, the counselor would acknowledge that the student is upset by the unfair treatment, but might ask the student to focus upon and elaborate more on his or her failing grades. (d) Agreement with a twist involves agreement with students in order to support them, but provides a slight change of direction. This technique combines reflection and reframing and enables students to understand that the counselor heard what they said, but gives them a new direction upon which to focus. In our example, the counselor would confirm that the student is feeling frustrated with the treatment that parents and teachers are giving and would then add that the student may be feeling anxious about the grades, which would redirect the focus away from the feelings of unfairness and frustration. (e) Emphasis on choice and control stresses to students that they are in control of the circumstance and have the choice to decide to make a change, which empowers self-direction and free choice. In our example, the counselor would acknowledge that the student is the one in control of the grades and any choice or plan to change them would have to be made by

the student, not his or her parents or teachers. (f) Reframing involves the counselor providing a new meaning or interpretation to a student's problems, which gives the counselor an opportunity to take a negative statement and turn it into a positive statement. The counselor might suggest that the parent and teacher nagging are because they believe in the student's capacity to be successful. The negative "nagging" is reframed as others having a positive view of the student.

Integration of MI and TTM in Individual Counseling

A student who is in the precontemplation stage may have no intention of changing and may avoid discussing the issue. In a respectful and non-judgmental manner, the school counselor can engage the student by discussing the potential outcome or consequences if the student continues to earn low grades. The school counselor should implement simple reflection to show that he or she understands and acknowledge the student's perception while recognizing the stage in which the student is functioning. A supportive counseling relationship increases the likelihood that the student can think about and identify potential consequences of not seeking to improve academically. Such a relationship differs from what the student may have experienced, which was likely overt and covert pressure to change from adults. This pressure may be necessary in order to help students learn societal expectations, but it often becomes counterproductive. Pressure often engenders resistance in students who resent, often unconsciously, what they perceive as a threat to their autonomy.

Students who demonstrate a desire to continue to meet with the school counselor may be demonstrating movement into the contemplative stage of change. In this stage, the school counselor supports students' contemplation by encouraging them

to examine both the advantages and disadvantages of attempting to improve their grades. The school counselor can use amplified reflection to help the students to reconsider their statements and perceptions. The school counselor can also implement an agreement with a twist, which allows students to feel supported, but gives them a change in focus. The use of these techniques may help students to move to the preparation stage of change.

In the preparation stage, students have an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of attempting to improve their academics. They begin to identify how they would improve their grades. MI suggests that when people identify a goal, they have the capacity and resources to move in their desired direction. The role of the school counselor, then, is to support this movement. Once students begin to make small changes, the counselor can explore their perspectives on those changes and can use reflection to acknowledge their feelings towards the changes. The school counselor can implement the shifting focus technique to move the focus away from the perceived barriers that are blocking progress. The students and counselor can discuss what has been effective in helping them to change. Furthermore, the counselor can offer evidence-based strategies (if the student is interested in exploring alternatives). The counselor and student can then explore the student's plan, which will help to move the student into the action stage of change.

During the action stage, the student is engaged in change. The counselor should work to explore students' thoughts and feelings and instill a sense of pride in their progress. The student and counselor can explore the strategies that have been effective

and ineffective in the quest for change. Reframing is an effective technique to assist students to focus on the positive changes that they have made.

In the maintenance stage of change, the student needs to be able to adjust behaviors in order to maintain a commitment to change. The counselor should focus the student on identifying barriers to maintaining change, as well as exploring the student's notions of solutions for addressing these barriers. It is not uncommon for students to report that their friends are not supportive of their efforts to improve academically. In such situations, parents and teachers often imply that students should simply relinquish these friends. Such a solution is typically unrealistic given how important peer relationships are to adolescents. Students may also have the perception that making new friends would be extremely difficult. Rather, the school counselor can explore the students' ideas about how they could increase their academic efforts while simultaneously dealing with the pressure from peers. The school counselor can reframe the student's efforts to make academic change while remaining connected to unsupportive friends as an example of maturity and courage.

In the termination stage of change, the school counselor should help students to reflect upon the changes that they have successfully implemented. The student and counselor can explore how the change has impacted the student's self-efficacy and confidence. In this stage it is important to help students to define the next steps in their academic development and connect this plan to resources that they have acquired. These resources will likely assist students with subsequent academic challenges.

Individual Counseling Case Study

Maggie was referred to the school counselor by her seventh grade teachers. She started the year by earning average grades on assignments and tests, but by the mid-point in the year, her teachers were reporting that she often failed to complete assignments and had failed approximately half of her tests and quizzes. Maggie's teachers were concerned about the change in behavior and her lack of enthusiasm to learn. They felt that Maggie was being "lazy" as she had considerable academic potential. When Maggie came to the school counselor's office, she was guarded and defensive. The school counselor explained to her that she was referred by her teachers because of their concern regarding her academic performance. Maggie shared that she thought her teachers and parents thought she was dumb, wasting her potential, and did not care about school. Maggie did not think her grades were a big deal and she thought her teachers and parents were being mean and unfair. It was clear that Maggie was in the precontemplation stage of change. During the first session, the school counselor sought to understand Maggie's perspective. She did not seek to establish goals, as Maggie was defensive about pressure from her parents and teachers to improve her grades. At the conclusion of the meeting, Maggie agreed to meet again and to think about whether she might have any goals with which the school counselor could assist.

Maggie began the second session by complaining about the pressure from her parents and teachers. The school counselor paraphrased her concerns, and suggested that it appeared that one of her goals was to "get her parents and teachers off her back." Maggie agreed that she would like to have less pressure, but this agreement did not result in her identifying ways to achieve this goal. Rather, Maggie continued to

complain about how she was being treated unfairly. When asked about how she could get her parents and teachers off of her back, she quickly responded that it would take improvement in her grades. Maggie and the school counselor discussed the potential consequences of her continuing to earn failing grades. Maggie identified that her parents and teachers would continue to bother her. She stated that she might have to take a summer school course or repeat 7th grade. After discussing the potential consequences of academic underachievement, Maggie was beginning to consider change. She was moving into the contemplation stage. The school counselor asked her to identify both the advantages and disadvantages of change. To the school counselor's surprise, it appeared that Maggie could not think of many disadvantages to improving her grades. She identified several advantages to improving her grades, including friends thinking she was smart, not having to be on restriction at home, getting her parents and teachers off her back, and not repeating the 7th grade. Maggie had been able to move from not recognizing her failing grades as an issue to acknowledging the effects of her lack of academic effort.

By the third session, Maggie was in the preparation stage and was ready to implement small changes. She shared that she had started to complete her assignments and the school counselor acknowledged that Maggie appeared proud. Maggie and the school counselor explored what was working and what additional steps she needed to take. Maggie stated the she was able complete her assignments during her study hall, but she still did not study for quizzes or tests. She was continuing to earn failing grades. Maggie explained that she could not concentrate at home because it was always loud and she was distracted. In addition, Maggie said that she would often run

out of time to study for tests. Through discussion, Maggie developed potential solutions for these concerns, which included studying in her room with her door shut and dedicating a specific time of day for study.

Maggie entered the action stage by the fourth session. She was implementing the strategies for change that were discussed in the previous session. Her grades were steadily improving and the counselor continually praised her efforts. Maggie stated she felt happy, proud, and relieved about the steps she was taking to change her performance. Her parents and teachers were getting off her back. She stated she was still having difficulty finding time to study, but studying in her room was working out well. The school counselor and Maggie worked together to develop a schedule that would allow time for Maggie to study adequately.

In the fifth session, Maggie had entered the maintenance stage of change. She was earning all passing grades. Maggie was able to recognize how much her grades and academic achievement meant to her. She and the school counselor discussed her success in improving her grades. The school counselor helped Maggie to explore obstacles that might prevent her from maintaining this improvement. Maggie stated that it might be difficult to complete her work in class if her friends tried to talk to her and distract her. She said it might be difficult to maintain her study schedule when her sport started up in the spring. Maggie and the school counselor explored potential solutions for these barriers, such as explaining to her friends how important her grades were and finding a different time to talk to them. The school counselor and Maggie created a schedule that Maggie could use in the spring when she started to have practice.

In the last session, Maggie was in the termination stage of change. She had integrated the skills and strategies that were developed into her daily life. She completed her assignments in class and studied for tests in her bedroom at a specific time each day. Her parents and teachers were impressed by Maggie's efforts and ability to make changes. She expressed that her ability to achieve her goals increased her confidence and belief in herself.

Use of MI and TTM in Consulting With Parents and Teachers

School counselors can advocate for students and their inherent ability for self-directed change by educating teachers and parents about MI and TTM. This education can help them to better understand the change process and their role within it. Such understanding can be important in situations where there is a mismatch between the parent's and child's desires and readiness for change. Through explanation of the MI and TTM models, the school counselor can help the parent to understand the child's stage of change and what effective helping strategies exist for a child at that level of readiness. In situations where parents or teachers are more motivated than the student, it is not uncommon for them to scold or criticize the student. Sometimes adults even withdraw from the student. These behaviors can generate increased resistance in the student and may devolve into a power struggle. Helping adult stakeholders to understand TTM can reduce these negative interactions.

Counselors can encourage parents and teachers to be on the lookout for a student's strengths, good steps, and intentions. Adult stakeholders should be "accentuating the positives" and acknowledging even small changes (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). Parents and teachers need to be helped to understand that students may be

resistant to change and that a constant focus on the problem behavior or the student's negative attributes may evoke resistance in the student. In contrast, teachers and parents can be helped to employ a more collaborative approach that would involve having the student self-reflect upon his or her goals. Change takes time and the process can be overwhelming for students and parents and teachers alike. Assisting all involved parties to develop a common approach to change can promote a less stressful process and have greater success.

As the adults in a student's life engage and invest in the process of change, a student will feel more supported and empowered to commit to their plan. School counselors can share with parents and teachers that students may feel angry, defensive, uncomfortable, and powerless when they are being told to change or when they have realized that there is something they would like to change about themselves (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). Students need to be allowed to experience natural consequences if they choose to continue a behavior that is self-defeating. They need to be helped to see the benefits of making positive changes on their own. These experiences are especially important for students in the precontemplative stage of change. Such students may not see their behaviors as a problem and may not take responsibility for their actions, even if there is a negative consequence (Prochaska et al., 2007). This lack of responsibility can be frustrating for parents and teachers.

School counselors can provide information to teachers and parents about the stages of change and how to meet their student's needs at each stage (see Appendix). School counselors may assist parents with ways to stay engaged with the student, empower change, be open to ideas, and make sure the student feels understood (Miller

& Rollnick, 2012). Again, maintaining these behaviors can be challenging in the face of students who feel as though they have tried everything possible or who are in denial that a problem exists (Prochaska et al., 2007).

Take the example of a student who earns failing grades in math for two straight grading quarters and admits that he does not study or try. The counselor may suggest that his parents and teachers use MI techniques to help the student acknowledge his problem and develop a plan to be more successful. School counselors can remind parents and teachers to steer away from demanding change, or telling the student what he *should* do. Additionally, the student's efforts at change should not be demeaned by telling him he *could do better*. During the change cycle, it is important to affirm that students are doing the best they know how in order to maintain a behavior or to try to change it (Prochaska et al., 2007). School counselors can guide parents and teachers to use MI type questioning to ask students what their approach would be to earn higher grades in math. Further, questions could be asked to ascertain how important better grades are to the student, or what *good* grades mean. In this way, the parent and teacher can tailor their approach to fit the stage of change at which the students are functioning and help them to commit to a plan for change. During the change process, with the assistance of parents and teachers, school counselors can build a support system for students within the home and school environments.

Parent Consultation Case Study

Marshall, a 9th grade student, was referred to the school counselor by his foreign language teacher because he failed the first semester. She reported that when she approached Marshall to help him improve his grade, he refused to talk with her. In the

first meeting with the school counselor, Marshall seemed annoyed that the foreign language teacher referred him. The school counselor attempted to develop rapport with Marshall by talking about things that he liked to do outside of school, but was unsuccessful. Marshall continued to stare at the floor in an angry manner. He indicated that he was not interested in improving his grade and that he wanted to withdraw from the class. When he was informed by the school counselor that this would require a parental signature, he appeared to become very nervous. Marshall accepted the school counselor's suggestion that they meet with his parents to discuss the issue.

Marshall's mother, Mrs. Smith, appeared to become angry when informed by phone that Marshall would like to withdraw from the foreign language class, but she agreed to meet with Marshall and the school counselor. At the meeting, Marshall's mother expressed her anger to Marshall. She expressed her incredulity that he was doing so poorly and her feelings of being upset because he may have blown his chances to be accepted to her alma mater. Marshall did not say anything in response to his mother's anger, but continued to stare angrily at the floor. Given Marshall's reluctance to talk with his mother, the school counselor suggested that he leave the room. Once Marshall left the room, Mrs. Smith directed her anger at the teacher and the school counselor, asserting that they should have done more to assist her son. The school counselors avoided becoming defensive and used active listening skills with Marshall's mother. Mrs. Smith's anger appeared to dissipate and she expressed anxiety that Marshall would not be able to attend her alma mater. She agreed that one of the problems may have been that she may have wanted Marshall to attend her alma mater more than he did. The school counselor suggested that Mrs. Smith's role may be not to

ensure that Marshall attends her alma mater, but to help Marshall to learn what he wants. Further, her role may also be to help him to learn to communicate what he wants, and when he needs help, to his parents and teachers. Mrs. Smith agreed to meet again the next week, and the school counselor asked her to think more about what she would like Marshall to develop within the next year.

At the next meeting, Mrs. Smith shared that she wanted her son to be happy and that she wanted him to do well in school, but she was confused about how to help. Mrs. Smith appeared receptive to the school counselor's explanation that Marshall was most likely in the precontemplative stage of change concerning his academic behaviors. Mrs. Smith shared that she realized that her wanting Marshall to do well academically had negatively impacted her relationship with him and he was increasingly withdrawing from her. The school counselor explained the theories of MI and TTM to Mrs. Smith, and provided her with a brief pamphlet explaining the theories. Mrs. Smith and the school counselor discussed concrete ways that she could encourage Marshall to think about what he would like to do after graduation and how not doing well in school might impact his goals. Mrs. Smith and the school counselor discussed how she could separate discussions about the future, which were bound to instill anxiety in both of them; from their relationship by ensuring that she and Marshall spent time together apart from discussions about school. She agreed to contact the school counselor within a month to share her progress in relating to Marshall about school and his future in a different manner.

When contacted by the school counselor the following month, Mrs. Smith reported progress in her relationship with her son. She shared that she believed she

had been too pushy in expecting her son to attend her alma mater. She also expressed that, in being less forceful with Marshall, she learned more about his goals for the future, which included attending a four year-college, but maybe not one as competitive as she wanted for him. Mrs. Smith also reported that Marshall made some progress in improving his grade in foreign language, and that he even initiated a request to get a tutor.

Drawbacks or Disadvantages of Method

One potential drawback to the use of MI and TTM is that other school personnel and parents may become impatient or frustrated with the school counselor with what they perceive to be as slow progress in the change of the student. In such situations, it is important that the school counselor educate the teacher or parent about the philosophy of the approach, helping them to understand the general nature of how change occurs and the benefits of providing the child with the opportunities for self-determination. Similarly, because the practitioner respects students' capacity for self-determination, it may be harder for the practitioner to measure students' progress and the impact of school counseling interventions.

Thus, school counselors who use MI and TTM should include not only provide to parents or educators objective outcome data indicators, such as increases in standardized test scores, grade point average, attendance, homework completion rates, etc., but also include measurement items regarding students' self-perceptions when measuring the impact of an intervention. A shortcoming regarding the use of TTM is that it is necessary to understand that the stage model provides the practitioner with a general understanding of the students' level of motivation for change. It should be not

be perceived as a strict stage model, as students are likely to demonstrate behaviors and attitudes indicative of several stages.

Conclusion

We believe that the MI and TTM frameworks offer school counselors considerable potential in support of their efforts to promote academic development in their students. These frameworks can be used in individual counseling, individual student planning, and in collaboration and consultation with parents and teachers. The TTM of change, when combined with motivational interviewing, allows school counselors, teachers, and parents to tailor their interventions to a student's current state of change readiness. When there is a match between the adult stakeholders' approach and the student's stage, self-efficacy for the process is enhanced. Increased self-determination and supportive interventions through the use of MI can lead to greater and more long-lasting gains in academic development. Given the shift in focus away from responsive services to academic development within the school counseling profession, we believe that this approach can help to bridge the gap between these two competing mandates and be of great benefit to students. Finally, there is emerging research to suggest that even brief applications of MI appear to promote students' academic achievement (Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014).

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Appendix

Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Change for Academic Behaviors

Stage of Change	Characteristic	Student Statement	Appropriate Intervention	Sample Dialogue
Precontemplation	-No intention of changing. Avoids discussion of the issue. Either sees situation as hopeless, or denies existence of issue.	-"I will be okay, I'm fine." -"Grades do not count until I get to high school." -"Why do people keep annoying me about this." -"I just have to be here so they stop bugging me."	-In a respectful manner discuss the possible consequences of continued academic underachievement.	-"What do you think will likely happen if your grades stay the same as they are now?"
Contemplation	-Aware of problem. Considering making changes, but lacks commitment. May remain in this stage for a considerable amount of time.	-"I want better grades, but it is hard to do my homework every night." -"I can't study every night for an hour." -" my teacher is too busy to help." -" I will try something else next time."	-Discuss advantages and disadvantages of making changes.	-"Would you like to explore what you see as the advantages and disadvantages of getting better grades."
Preparation	-Recognizes advantages of making changes and is thinking about how to change. May have made small behavioral changes.	-"I really want to get better grades and I have ideas on how to do so." -"Last week in math, when I was frustrated, I was able to take a break and come back to the problem in a little while." -"I know I could improve my math grade if I organized my binder, studied every night for an hour, asked my teacher to explain what I don't understand, or asked a friend to help me."	-Explore the student's perspectives regarding his or her small steps, asking what the student thinks has been effective, & what additional steps the student plans to take. -Ask the student if he or she is interested in learning about evidence-based strategies, such as strategies for note-taking, test-taking, etc.	-"It sounds like you feel proud about the changes you have started to make."

Stage of Change	Characteristic	Student Statement	Appropriate Intervention	Sample Dialogue
Action	-Actively engaging in steps to change.	-"I'm working hard to get better grades." -"For the last week I've been completing my homework each night as soon as I get home from school."	-Explore the student's self-generated strategies for improvement, including what he or she has found to be effective, why the student thinks it is effective, and what the student plans to increase. -Explore the student's thoughts and feelings regarding the progress he or she is making in an attempt to instill a sense of pride in the student.	-"What have you have learned about what works?" -"What do you plan to do more or less of?"
Maintenance	-Achieved goals. Student adjusts his or her behaviors to maintain commitment to changes/goals. The student may be aware of obstacles to maintaining progress, such as a tendency to not follow through on plans when around peers.	-"I do not want anything to get in the way of the changes I've made, as I really want to get into that college." -"It is really hard to keep things up when I am around some of my friends." -"My friends don't have to do their homework right after school, but I know if I don't I will not complete it. I will try to finish it right after school or in a study hall if I know I want to do something with friends after school."	-Help student identify potential obstacles to maintaining changes and explore solutions to address identified obstacles.	-"You are really committed to this and I can see that it is really important to you."

Stage of Change	Characteristic	Student Statement	Appropriate Intervention	Sample Dialogue
Termination	-Behavioral changes have been achieved & are thoroughly integrated into the student's daily functioning. There is little chance of relapse.	-"I'm really into what I'm doing. It is hard to believe that I used to struggle with school." "I've organized all my binders & folders so that I can easily find my work & classroom materials; I know that this takes me only a few minutes after class and it has enabled me to complete my work on time & not become frustrated."	-Help student reflect upon the various changes that he or she has made. -Explore how the behavioral changes the student has made has resulted in changes regarding the student's self-efficacy/confidence.	-"You have worked really hard. What does this say to you about your ability to achieve your goals?"

Note. Modified from: Prochaska, J. O., Norcross, J. C., & DiClimente, C. C. (2007). *Changing for good: A revolutionary six-stage recovery program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward.* New York: William Morrow.