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*Seattle Pacific University*

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Seattle Pacific University

Training School Counselors to Use Motivational Interviewing: How School Counselor  
Preparation Programs Provide Motivational Interviewing Training

by

REAGAN A. NORTH

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

Of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Seattle Pacific University

April 2019



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Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

In a data-driven educational landscape, it is essential that School Counselor Preparation Programs (SCPPs) train School Counselor Trainees (SCTs) to use effective counseling techniques (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Perusse, Poynton, Parzych, & Goodnough, 2015), especially given their high caseloads (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2012, 2018b; Astramovich, Hoskins, Gutierrez, & Bartlett, 2013; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Moyer, 2011). The primary researcher for this study investigated how SCPPs train SCTs to use Motivational Interviewing, an evidence-based counseling style that utilizes person-centered techniques to increase clients' motivation to make positive changes in their lives (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The researcher used a qualitative, multiple case study design to investigate the MI training at three SCPPs, specifically by interviewing one counselor educator at each SCPP and by examining syllabi and textbooks. Using these data sources, the primary researcher and research assistant identified five themes: a) state of MI training over time, b) counselor educators' training in MI, c) program-wide topics related to MI training, d) MI ideas and techniques, and e) challenges. As a result of the findings, the researchers discussed implications including the need for a program-wide strategy for MI training, a shift to broader utilization of MI, clarity about essential aspects of MI for SCTs, and increased MI training for counselor educators.

*Keywords: Motivational interviewing, school counselor preparation programs, school counselor trainees*

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

In the current educational landscape, educators face statistical accountability in the form of high-stakes testing (Goodman-Scott, 2015). Within such a context, school counselors must be able to demonstrate that their work with students in all domains has a positive impact on their academic performance (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). To do so, school counselors must be trained in high-quality school counselor preparation programs (SCPPs) that prepare school counselor trainees (SCTs) to utilize effective techniques and interventions (Perusse, Poynton, Parzych, & Goodnough, 2015). A particular counseling style called Motivational Interviewing (MI) has garnered attention in the past several decades as an evidence-based approach to help people make positive changes, and it is gaining traction in the K-12 setting (Herman, Reinke, Frey, & Shepard, 2014; Miller & Rollnick, 2013; Rollnick, Kaplan, & Rutschman, 2016; Snape & Atkinson, 2016). This study seeks to investigate how SCPPs train SCTs to use MI with students.

#### **Demands on School Counselors**

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) calls for school counselors to support the academic, social-emotional, and career domains of students' lives (ASCA, 2012). Given this crucial yet arduous mission, ASCA (2012) recommends a student-to-school-counselor ratio of no more than 250:1. Nonetheless, according to the most recent available data (2015-16 school year), school counselors across the United States served an average of 464 students (ASCA, 2018b). Additionally, school counselors are routinely burdened by non-counseling duties, taking time away from their central mission and

rendering them less effective (ASCA, 2012; Astramovich, Hoskins, Gutierrez, & Bartlett, 2013; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Moyer, 2011).

Given the limited amount of time school counselors have to care for their students, ASCA (2012) advocates that school counselors utilize a tiered approach in which all students receive support, while those with the most profound needs receive more extensive care, often in the form of individual counseling sessions. School counselors require training in impactful counseling techniques to most effectively serve students with the greatest needs (Ziomek-Daigle, Goodman-Scott, Cavin, & Donohue, 2016).

### **School Counselor Preparation Programs**

School counselors receive the bulk of their training in SCPPs, which are almost universally graduate programs in the university setting (Goodman-Scott, 2015). The counselor educators who lead SCPPs derive the content they provide SCTs from the recommendations of professional organizations such as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2017) and ASCA (2012, 2015a) as well as state laws governing the licensure of school counselors (ASCA, 2018a; Goodman-Scott, 2015). In addition to SCPP coursework, SCTs also experience fieldwork in the form of practicums and internships. In these settings, SCTs serve local schools while honing their counseling skills by working with actual students (Perusse et al., 2015).

School counselor trainees receive clinical training, or that portion of their SCPP specific to mental health counseling, as a part of both their coursework and fieldwork (Perusse et al., 2015). Clinical skills are vital, as school counselors use them to help



students thrive in academic, social-emotional, and career domains (ASCA, 2012, 2015b). Students who suffer from mental health issues often struggle with academic and behavioral issues which have the potential to derail their success in school and beyond (ASCA, 2015b). Given that most students who have mental health issues never receive support from a therapist (Erford, Newsome, & Rock, 2007), school counselors are in a particularly strategic position to support students (Lemberger, Wachter Morris, Clemens, & Smith, 2010). Schools are often the first place where mental health issues surface (Carlson & Kees, 2013; Froeschle & Moyer, 2004), and school counselors are on the front lines in providing help to students (Carlson & Kees, 2013). Consequently, it is essential that school counselors receive training in potent clinical techniques.

### **Motivational Interviewing**

To provide effective individual sessions, school counselors need efficient and productive therapeutic techniques to help struggling students (Cinotti, 2014; Walley & Grothaus, 2009). Motivational Interviewing could be a powerful tool in the hands of well-trained school counselors (Lambie, 2004; Sink, 2011; Stoltz & Young, 2012).

### **Definition and Empirical Support**

MI is a style of counseling in which interviewers help clients increase their motivation to make positive behavioral changes (Herman et al., 2014). It is built upon the foundation of person-centered counseling, and many of the techniques echo and enhance person-centered approaches (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The overarching mission of therapists using MI is to encourage change talk and limit sustain talk (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). In other words, interviewers encourage clients to describe what it would be like to make positive changes and discourage them from talking about the status quo.

Interviewers use empathic techniques to build strong working relationships with clients even as they encourage clients to create a compelling vision for change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The journey of helping clients move from ambivalence to change is marked by four processes: engaging in strong relationships with clients, focusing clients' desires on one change, evoking change talk, and planning practical steps to make the change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

MI's use originated in the field of addiction, and many studies have provided evidence for its effectiveness in helping clients with a myriad of addictions (Bernstein et al., 2005; D'Amico, Miles, Stern, & Meredith, 2008; Herman & Fahnlander, 2003; Miller, Sovereign, & Krege, 1988; Peterson et al., 2009). Empirical evidence has also provided support for its usefulness in the fields of medical care (Armstrong et al., 2011; Gowers et al., 2007; West, Gore, DiLillo, Greene, & Bursac, 2007) and social work (Musser, Semiatin, Taft, & Murphy, 2008; Nock & Kazdin, 2005).

### **School-based MI**

Researchers have recently utilized MI in the school setting and have uncovered evidence of its effectiveness (Atkinson & Ames, 2007; Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Snape & Atkinson, 2017; Strait et al., 2012; Terry, Smith, Strait, & McQuillin, 2013; Terry, Strait, McQuillin, & Smith, 2014). In the United Kingdom, Atkinson and colleagues have used a qualitative approach to study the impact of MI on students. Researchers primarily used MI with disaffected students (e.g., students with negative attitudes and beliefs about school that led to behavioral disruptions and low achievement; Atkinson & Woods, 2003). When they exposed students to MI, researchers found that attitudes and confidence levels increased, attendance improved,

behavioral problems decreased, and academic motivation grew. (Atkinson & Ames, 2007; Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Snape & Atkinson, 2017). In the United States, a research team led by Strait and Terry has used quantitative methods to assess the impact of MI in schools. Graduate students provided individual MI sessions to middle school students and found that participants' academic achievement improved, especially in math, as did their classroom engagement and homework completion (Strait et al., 2012; Terry, Smith, Strait, & McQuillin, 2013; Terry, Strait, McQuillin, & Smith, 2014).

### **What about School Counselors?**

Though empirical evidence lends support to the use of MI in schools, researchers have yet to utilize school counselors to provide the MI interventions (Atkinson & Ames, 2007; Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Snape & Atkinson, 2017; Strait et al., 2012; Terry, Smith, Strait, & McQuillin, 2013; Terry, Strait, McQuillin, & Smith, 2014). This is surprising given the apparent theoretical and practical fit of MI as a tool for school counselors. From a theoretical perspective, MI's foundation in person-centered counseling along with its openness to direction from the interviewer aligns with school counselors' responsibility to support students' self-determination while also guiding them toward positive change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; Sink, 2011). From a practical perspective, MI appears potentially useful to school counselors. Research suggests that it is effective in schools, sometimes even after a single session (Strait et al., 2012). This would almost certainly be of great benefit to school counselors, as their large caseloads make long-term interventions difficult (ASCA, 2012, 2018b). Additionally, MI provides the opportunity for students to exercise autonomy and

abstract thought by considering what change would look like and how they could achieve it (Naar-King & Suarez, 2011).

Though the above discussion of the theoretical roots, clinical practice, and empirical evidence supporting MI suggests that it has potential to be a useful tool for school counselors, this conclusion must remain tentative at this time given that MI research specific to school counseling is extremely limited. A thorough search of available literature failed to reveal a single study investigating outcomes when school counselors provided MI to their students.

Given the apparent theoretical and practical fit, it is surprising such research has not been pursued. A potential answer may lie in the fact that insufficient numbers of school counselors have been trained in their SCPPs to use MI. Previous research related to the use of MI in schools utilized clinical mental health graduate students, undergraduate psychology students, doctoral students, and paraprofessionals to provide MI sessions to students (Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Snape & Atkinson, 2015; Strait et al., 2012; Strait et al., 2017; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014). It is possible that researchers studying the effectiveness of MI in schools have not had access to enough well-trained school counselors. During a search of available literature, the researcher found no evidence regarding the number or percentage of SCPPs providing MI training. Given that the research base concerning the effectiveness of MI is growing (Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Snape & Atkinson, 2015; Strait et al., 2017; Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014), it is reasonable to believe that the momentum for MI in schools will continue to build.

## **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how counselor educators in SCPPs train SCTs to use MI. The primary researcher and research assistant searched for themes having the potential to aid SCPP stakeholders as they consider their practices regarding MI training for SCTs.

The overarching research question for the project was:

- How do counselor educators in SCPPs train SCTs to use MI?

The researchers also addressed sub-questions including:

- What is the format of MI training at various SCPPs?
- How did SCPPs' MI training come to be, how has it evolved over time, and how do counselor educators expect it to change in the future?
- On which MI ideas or techniques do counselor educators focus more or less?
- Which MI ideas or techniques are the easiest or hardest for SCTs to become competent using?
- Which training techniques do counselor educators find most effective?
- How do counselor educators evaluate SCTs' ability to use MI?
- How do counselor educators prepare themselves to train SCTs to use MI?
- What challenges do counselor educators face in training SCTs to use MI?

## **Definition of Terms**

The primary researcher regularly used the following terms throughout the report<sup>1</sup>:

---

<sup>1</sup> The definitions refer to the way the researcher used the terms relative to this project. In Chapter Two, terms may be used differently as they refer to other studies.

**Case**

Generally, a case is a focal point of study in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this particular study, a case referred to a particular SCPP. Cases should not be confused with participants, who were counselor educators serving in particular SCPPs.

**Clinical Training**

Clinical training referred to the portion of SCTs' preparation that was specific to mental health counseling (Perusse et al., 2015). School counselors use clinical skills in individual and group settings to help students thrive in academic, social-emotional, and career domains (ASCA, 2012, 2015b; Walley & Grothaus, 2009).

**Counselor Educator**

A counselor educator was a professor, associate professor, assistant professor, adjunct faculty member, or other instructor who trained SCTs in a SCPP (Perusse et al., 2015).

**School Counselor Trainee (SCT)**

The term school counselor trainee (SCT) referred to a student in a SCPP who was preparing to become a school counselor (as used in Busacca & Wester, 2006; Studer, 2006; Wilson & Ziomek-Daigle, 2013). Readers should not confuse SCTs with the term "students," which referred to children in K-12 schools.

**Motivational Interviewing (MI)**

Motivational Interviewing (MI) was a counseling style in which counselors assist clients in resolving ambivalence and making positive changes in their lives (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Counselors who used MI rely on person-centered techniques to help

clients focus on change talk, or making changes to the status quo (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

### **Participant**

In this study, a participant was a counselor educator who works in a SCPP. The primary researcher interviewed participants to gather data regarding MI training in their respective SCPPs. Cases, on the other hand, were the particular SCPPs for which the participants work.

### **School Counselor Preparation Program (SCPP)**

A school counselor preparation program (SCPP) was a graduate-level university program that trained school counselor trainees (SCTs) to become school counselors (Goodman-Scott, 2015). During their training, SCTs typically experienced a mix of coursework and fieldwork (Perusse et al., 2015). Professional organizations and state laws significantly influenced the content and format of SCPPs (ASCA, 2018a; CACREP, 2017; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Mascari & Webber, 2013; Perusse et al., 2015).

### **Student**

In this study, a student was a child in the K-12 setting and should not be confused with SCTs, who were graduate students enrolled in SCPPs.

### **Summary of Introduction**

In an increasingly data-driven educational landscape, it is vital that SCPPs train SCTs to use effective counseling techniques (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Perusse et al., 2015). This is particularly true given the arduous demands and high caseloads placed on school counselors (ASCA, 2012, 2018b; Astramovich et al., 2013; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Moyer, 2011). Counselor educators who lead SCPPs base their programs' structure and

content largely on the requirements/recommendations of professional organizations like CACREP and ASCA as well as state certification requirements (ASCA, 2012, 2015, 2018a; CACREP, 2017; Goodman-Scott, 2015). School counselor trainees (SCTs) receive clinical training, or that portion of their SCPP specific to mental health training, through coursework and fieldwork (Perusse et al., 2015). Clinical training is essential for SCTs, as they need to be prepared to assist students with mental health issues have the potential to derail their academic and social/emotional progress (ASCA, 2015b).

As school counselors work with individual students, they need productive and efficient counseling techniques (Cinotti, 2014; Walley & Grothaus, 2009). MI is a counseling style that utilizes person-centered techniques to increase clients' motivation to make positive changes in their lives (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Researchers have provided MI as an intervention in the school setting and have found that students' attitudes and confidence levels increased, attendance improved, behavioral problems decreased, academic motivation grew, and academic achievement increased, particularly in math. (Atkinson & Ames, 2007; Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Snape & Atkinson, 2017; Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014). Unfortunately, researchers have failed to utilize school counselors to provide MI interventions, though they are well-suited to provide MI sessions in schools (Sink, 2011; Strait et al., 2012).

This study sought to investigate how SCPPs train SCTs to use MI. The central research question was: How do counselor educators in SCPPs train SCTs to use MI? In the process of considering this question, the primary researcher hoped to uncover themes



that would be helpful for counselor educators as they consider how to best provide MI training.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

In this investigation of the ways in which school counselor preparation programs (SCPPs) train school counselor trainees (SCTs) to use Motivational Interviewing (MI), it is essential to understand the history and current state of SCPPs as well as the evidence regarding the use of MI in school settings.

#### **School Counselor Preparation Programs**

##### **Historical Context**

The role school counselors play has significantly evolved over time, generally moving from offering vocational guidance to providing comprehensive school counseling programs (Cinotti, 2014; DeKruyf, Auger, & Trice-Black, 2013). As school counselors' roles have changed, so have the content and format of SCPPs (Merlin, Pagano, George, Zanone, & Newman, 2017).

Vocational guidance began in schools during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the United States was experiencing a cataclysmic economic shift, as the center of economic life moved from fields to cities (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The mass migration of workers into urban areas required significant changes in public schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Specifically, educators felt the need to help their students transition from the classroom to the workplace (DeKruyf et al., 2013). In many schools, teachers added the role of guidance counselor while continuing their teaching duties. They received no extra pay and little specialized training (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). In response to many administrators using guidance counselors as assistant administrators,

Myers (1923, 1924) argued that guidance counselors held a specific educational role and should receive specialized training to maximize their benefit to students.

As decades passed, the rise in the popularity of psychological services had a major impact on guidance counselors (Cinotti, 2014). In the 1950s and 1960s, it was commonplace for guidance counselors to work alongside school psychologists and nurses to provide holistic student services (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). In 1958, the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) altered the course of guidance counselor training (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). The NDEA, in an effort to prepare the United States for potential Cold War conflicts, sought to train counselors and place them in schools nationwide (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). Unfortunately, though most of these training programs were specific to counselors, they typically focused either on the psychological or educational approach to the field, thereby leading to further confusion about the role of guidance counselors (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011).

Beginning in the 1970s, a significant change began in school counseling that has continued to shape the profession to the present: the rise of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (CGCP; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). CGCPs arose as guidance counselors sought ways to provide career guidance, social-emotional training, and academic services to all students (DeKruyf et al., 2013; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). Unfortunately, as late as the 1990s, most universities were not preparing school counselors, as they were becoming widely known, to create and lead CGCPs (The Education Trust, 2009).

As comprehensive models of school counseling continued to gain momentum, SCPPs responded by training SCTs to create and maintain these types of school

counseling programs (Cinotti, 2014). Widespread acceptance of CGCPs occurred in large part due to the creation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model in 2001 (Cinotti, 2014). According to the most recent version of the ASCA National Model (2012), school counselors should care for all students' academic, social-emotional, and career health. This high calling requires significant training in the form of school counseling-specific graduate programs (ASCA, 2014).

### **Modern School Counselor Preparation Programs**

**Determining factors of program format.** Modern SCPPs are almost universally graduate programs (Goodman-Scott, 2015). Multiple factors determine the curriculum of SCPPs including the recommendations and requirements of professional organizations and state laws (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Perusse et al., 2015).

#### ***Professional organizations.***

*The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).* The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs was founded in 1981 by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision and the American Counseling Association with the central goal of creating guidelines for counseling graduate programs. Authors of these guidelines intended them to enhance uniformity, credibility, and professionalism (Merlin et al., 2017). CACREP standards for accreditation of graduate programs include general standards for all counseling programs as well as specific requirements for specialties like school counseling (CACREP, 2017). As of 2016, school counseling programs were the largest specialty among CACREP-accredited programs (CACREP, 2017).

To receive CACREP accreditation, SCPPs must fulfill a number of requirements including a minimum number of credit hours in specific courses, academic support for SCTs, recruitment of diverse cohorts, and highly qualified faculty (CACREP, 2017). In 2016, CACREP increased the minimum number of credit hours for accredited SCPPs from 48 to 60 hours to unify requirements from various counseling specialties (Merlin et al., 2017). Concerning coursework, CACREP requires that accredited SCPPs include classes regarding:

- professional counseling orientation and ethical practice,
- social and cultural diversity,
- human growth and development,
- career development,
- counseling and helping relationships,
- group counseling and group work,
- assessment and testing, and
- research and program evaluation (CACREP, 2017).

In addition to coursework, CACREP also requires that SCTs receive on-site training and supervision. Specifically, CACREP (2017) requires that SCTs complete 100 hours of fieldwork during a practicum experience as well as 600 hours in an internship. During these fieldwork experiences, SCTs must receive both site supervision and university supervision (CACREP, 2017). CACREP (2017) guidelines specify how many of the required hours must be direct (i.e., meeting with students) versus indirect (i.e., completing administrative support services).

Perusse et al. (2015) conducted a national survey that included 126 SCPPs and found that 57% were CACREP-accredited. The results reflected a substantial increase from the results of the research team's previous study in 2001, at which time only 33% of SCPPs were CACREP-accredited (Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001). The increase in CACREP-accredited SCPPs is encouraging, as school counselors serve as both educators and counselors and must complete a rigorous training regimen to be competent in both roles (Merlin et al., 2017).

*The American School Counselor Association (ASCA).* The American School Counselor Association is a nationwide organization that sets professional standards for school counselors. ASCA calls on school counselors to create CGCPs which align with the ASCA national model (ASCA, 2012) in an effort to support students' academic achievement, social-emotional health, and career readiness. The ASCA National Model includes four components: *foundation*, in which counselors outline the philosophy and mission of the program; *management*, in which counselors determine how to organize and wisely use resources; *delivery*, in which counselors deliver curriculum and provide direct and indirect services; and *accountability*, in which counselors use data to track program effectiveness (ASCA, 2012).

To create and implement an effective program which aligns with the National Model, ASCA recommends that school counselors be trained in graduate-level SCPPs designed to build counselors' knowledge and skills in a number of areas (ASCA, 2015a). School counselors should be well-versed in clinical theory and practice including human development, counseling theories and skills, career and college coaching, multicultural counseling, and legal/ethical practice in individual care, group work, classroom guidance,

and crisis response (ASCA, 2015a). Additionally, school counselors should be prepared to collaborate and consult with all stakeholders in the educational setting including parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and community members (ASCA, 2015a). School counselors should also be trained as educational leaders and advocates who know how to identify struggling groups of students and develop strategies to eliminate barriers to achievement (ASCA, 2015a). Lastly, school counselors must be prepared to use data to track outcomes and advocate for their programs (ASCA, 2015a).

*State laws.* All 50 states have requirements that school counselors must meet in order to be licensed, though the requirements vary widely from state to state (ASCA, 2018a; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Mascari & Webber, 2013). Not all states require school counseling-specific master degrees, and their specifications differ regarding expected course content, credit hours, practicum and internship hours, supervision, and previous counseling/education experience (Goodman-Scott, 2015).

SCPPs closely follow the licensure requirements of the states in which their universities are situated (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). This often includes training specific to the state's model of school counseling, if one exists (Cinotti, 2014). Unfortunately, many states' licensure requirements have not evolved along with the movement in the profession toward CGCPs. The result is that, although CACREP and ASCA recommend substantial training in creating and maintaining CGCPs, some SCPPs are lacking in this regard (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). In light of the widely-varying state licensure requirements, CACREP's and ASCA's roles in providing nationwide accreditation standards and training recommendations are vital for the health of the profession (Mascari & Webber, 2013).

*Other possible factors impacting SCPP content.* As previously noted, the content and format of SCPPs are typically determined by professional organizations and state laws. Some SCPPs include curriculum focusing largely on particular aspects of the school counseling role including supporting students with disabilities (Hall, McDougald, & Kresica, 2013; McEachern, 2003; Milsom & Akos, 2003), managing students in the classroom setting (Geltner, Cunningham, & Caldwell, 2011), helping students cope with crises (Allen et al., 2002), serving students with exceptional intelligence (McEachern, 2003; Wood, 2010), and supporting students of various sexual orientations and gender identities (Jennings, 2014).

One significant factor impacting SCPPs is whether school counselor trainees (SCTs) take some or all of their classes with trainees pursuing other counseling fields (Perusse et al., 2015). For example, some SCTs take courses with future mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers. Perusse et al. (2015) and DeKruyf et al. (2013) noted concern that SCTs may not be as well trained in these programs because they do not take as many school counseling-specific courses. In a national study, Perusse et al. (2015) found that 15.9% of SCPPs provided courses that were entirely school counseling specific, whereas 24.6% of SCPPs provided no courses specifically designed for school counselors. A search of present literature revealed no research comparing the outcomes of school counseling-specific programs versus combined programs.

**Clinical training.** As noted above, professional organizations and state laws do not require that school counselors be trained in particular counseling theories or techniques such as MI. They do, however, require school counselors to receive general



clinical training that includes both coursework and fieldwork. Such training should result in school counselors becoming effective mental health professionals who are knowledgeable of terminology, symptoms, treatment, legal/ethics issues, and systemic barriers (Cinotti, 2014; Walley & Grothaus, 2009). Effective clinical training is an essential element of SCPPs, as school counselors work in environments in which one in four students has a diagnosable mental health disorder, but 75% of those students receive no form of care (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003).

Clinical training in SCPPs typically includes a combination of coursework, a practicum experience, and an internship. As previously mentioned, CACREP (2017) accreditation requires and ASCA (2014) guidelines recommend this threefold method. In a nationwide survey of SCPPs, Perusse et al. (2015) found that 97.6% of programs required a practicum experience, reflecting an 11.4% increase since the previous version of the survey (Perusse et al., 2001). Additionally, 92.0% of SCPPs required an internship, a 4.6% increase since the previous study (Perusse et al., 2001; Perusse et al., 2015). School counselor trainees' fieldwork is critical, as those who receive more exposure to school environments more readily view themselves as leaders and feel more prepared for the profession (Coker & Schrader, 2004).

Unfortunately, SCTs' fieldwork experiences widely vary. Some SCTs complete their practicum and/or internship in clinical settings as opposed to school settings (Coker & Schrader, 2004). Those whose programs use clinical settings for fieldwork are likely to be overwhelmed when they experience difficult factors common to school settings including large caseloads, short counseling timeframes, and non-clinical duties (Coker & Schrader, 2004). Akos and Scarborough (2004) studied 59 SCPP internship syllabi from

throughout the United States and found a wide diversity of on-site requirements. Researchers found that all had minimum hour requirements, but they also found that syllabi lacked clarity regarding the definition of a successful internship, what constituted direct and indirect hours, and how SCTs were expected to hone their clinical skills.

One of the most influential aspects of fieldwork is the supervision provided by site and university supervisors (DeKruyf et al., 2013). In discussing the importance of supervision, Studer (2005) went so far as to argue that, without quality supervision, SCTs would be unlikely to continue to apply the skills they learned. CACREP (2017) requires and ASCA (2014) recommends that SCTs be supervised by a certified school counselor as well as a university supervisor. Unfortunately, very few school counselors have received specific training in providing clinical supervision, and the ASCA National Model does not prioritize it (DeKruyf et al., 2013; Somody, Henderson, Cook, & Zambrano, 2008). This is unfortunate considering that quality supervision is vital in increasing counseling skills and decreasing the risk of unethical practices (Lambie & Sias, 2009).

**Results.** Having considered the various aspects of modern SCPPs, it is important to investigate how well they prepare SCTs to be school counselors, both in a general sense and with regard to clinical practice.

**General results.** It is difficult to numerically quantify the overall effectiveness of school counselors, and, therefore, it is also difficult to compare SCPPs from the perspective of school counselors' job performance (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). That being the case, research comparing SCPPs typically relies on school counselors' self-report. The following studies, therefore, suffer the inherent weaknesses inherent in self-report,

namely questions about the reliability of participant responses. This is particularly the case for these studies because school counselors committed a significant amount of time and money to their SCPPs and are likely to think positively of them. One study by Bridgeland and Bruce (2011) utilized survey results from more than 5,300 middle and high school counselors located throughout the United States. Concerning the quality of their SCPP, only 16% of school counselors found it to be highly effective, while 56% considered it somewhat effective, and 28% thought it was not effective at all. It is concerning that more school counselors found their SCPP to be not effective at all than those who found their SCPP to be highly effective, especially considering the expected positive bias of respondents toward their SCPP. To further understand the data, researchers conducted follow-up interviews and generated the resultant hypothesis that SCPPs had not followed the philosophical shift in the profession away from individual counseling and toward more systemic approaches, specifically in relation to college and career readiness. A significant limitation specific to the Bridgeland and Bruce (2011) study was that it did not include elementary school counselors.

Schayot (2008) considered how well-prepared school counselors perceived themselves regarding the various roles they fulfilled in their normal duties. The researcher used CACREP and ASCA standards to identify 30 school counseling roles. ASCA members who completed the survey ( $n = 2,113$ ) reported that they felt somewhat prepared to fulfill 27 of the 30 roles. The three areas where counselors felt somewhat unprepared were serving students with learning disabilities, identifying funding sources, and using technology effectively.

In a similar study, Goodman-Scott (2015) surveyed ASCA members nationwide ( $n = 1,052$ ) regarding perceptions of their preparedness to complete duties commonly requested of them. Respondents reported being the most prepared to counsel students regarding social/emotional issues, manage their professional development, and provide small group counseling related to social skills. They felt the least prepared to respond to student health issues, cover classes for absent teachers, and schedule students for classes. The researcher used ASCA recommendations to define duties as appropriate or inappropriate for school counselors and found a significant difference between counselors' preparedness to fulfill them ( $p = .001$ ,  $partial \eta^2 = .01$ ). This suggested that SCPPs prepared respondents to fulfill appropriate counseling duties better than non-counseling duties.

Finally, Kolodinsky, Draves, Schroder, Lindsey, and Zlatev (2009) surveyed elementary, middle, and high school counselors ( $n = 155$ ) from various regions of Arizona. In this study, 55% of school counselors indicated that their SCPP prepared them well or very well while only 10% said they were poorly prepared. Additionally, researchers asked counselors an open-ended question regarding how they might have been better prepared, and common results included crisis response, parent meetings, and special education. The most significant limitation of the study was its generalizability, as it only included school counselors from one state.

***Clinical training results.*** As with research regarding the general results of SCPPs, studies exploring the effectiveness of clinical training largely rely on self-report surveys, thereby potentially limiting their validity due to respondent bias. The most comprehensive study relative to the topic was conducted by Carlson and Kees (2013).

The researchers utilized online surveys of ASCA members ( $n = 120$ ) to assess counselors' training in mental health interventions. When asked about general counseling skills, school counselors reported being the most confident in consultation with parents/teachers/administrators, collaboration, and ethical practice. School counselors reported being the least confident in using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) to diagnose client issues, conducting family counseling, and providing treatment planning. With regard to assisting students struggling with particular DSM diagnoses, school counselors expressed being the most confident when addressing anxiety disorders, disorders primarily diagnosed in children, and cognitive disorders while they proclaimed being the least confident in addressing factitious disorders, sleep disorders, and psychotic disorders. In general, the results aligned with expected school counseling practice, as school counselors should not diagnose or provide extensive psychological treatment (ASCA, 2012, 2015b). Results suggested that school counselors were, on the whole, comfortable with providing basic counseling services to students but were less confident in providing treatment for significant mental health diagnoses. The authors recommended that SCPPs provide more in-depth coursework focused on the mental health needs of students and families. The study suffered a low return rate (11%).

In a qualitative study, Walley and Grothaus (2013) studied school counselors' perceptions of their ability to recognize and respond to students' mental health issues. Respondents included eight middle and high school counselors from one southeastern state who graduated from one of three SCPPs in the 12 months prior to the study. As a result of oral and written interviews, researchers found that most respondents found the

fieldwork in their SCPP to be particularly helpful in improving their counseling skills. However, 5 of the 8 respondents reported that the clinical training they received during their SCPP was limited, prompting them to seek further knowledge through workshops, conferences, and research. The qualitative nature of the study limited its generalizability, though the resultant themes echoed the results from the Carlson and Kees (2013) study, indicating that SCTs should receive more in-depth training in mental health counseling.

Other studies concerning the results of clinical training in SCPPs focused on particular aspects of mental health counseling. One study addressed school counselors' confidence in using a particular skill: group counseling (Bore, Armstrong, & Womack, 2010). School counselors ( $n = 304$ ) from one southern and one southwestern state responded to an online survey. Only 43% of the respondents were satisfied with the training they received in group counseling during their SCPP, while only 48% were satisfied with the supervision they received while conducting group counseling during their fieldwork. The study's major limitation was its generalizability, as respondents worked in one of two states.

A study by Allen et al. (2002) concerned school counselors' preparedness to support students in crisis. When discussing moments of crisis, the researchers included suicide, death, shootings, gang violence, natural disasters, and widespread substance/sexual/physical abuse. Participants ( $n = 236$ ) were ASCA members who responded to phone or email survey requests. Only 64% of responding school counselors reported receiving crisis intervention training during their SCPP, including both coursework and fieldwork. Against that background, researchers were not surprised to find that only 18% of responding school counselors perceived themselves to be well-

prepared or very well-prepared to support students in crisis situations. Allen et al. (2002) recommended that SCPPs provide significantly more training relative to those counseling skills best-suited for moments of crisis.

Finally, a research team investigated the self-reported preparedness of middle school (Burrow-Sanchez, Lopez, & Slagle, 2008) and high school (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009) counselors relative to serving students with substance abuse issues. Though the researchers reported the results in separate articles, they gathered the data as part of one study. Participants in this study were ASCA members ( $n = 285$ ) from all regions of the United States who responded to a physical survey received via mail. Both middle school and high school counselors reported that the two most-needed areas of training were screening/assessment and individual counseling interventions. The researchers were concerned by these results, as screening/assessment and individual counseling interventions are the “bread-and-butter” of substance abuse intervention (Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009, p. 281). They called for SCPPs to more thoroughly train SCTs in this regard.

## **Motivational Interviewing**

### **Theory and Practice**

Motivational Interviewing is a style of counseling in which interviewers assist clients in resolving ambivalence toward making positive behavioral changes (Herman et al., 2014). As the name suggests, MI focuses on enhancing clients’ motivation to make changes as opposed to teaching skills to change their behavior.

MI is firmly rooted in Carl Rogers’ (1951) client-centered therapy, as is evident in the fact that Miller and Rollnick (2013) hold high the importance of clients’ strengths and

repeatedly argue that most people have within them the skills they need to change. Similar to client-centered therapists, MI interviewers treat clients with unconditional positive regard, deeply value the relationship between clients and therapists, and believe that accurate empathy has a profound impact (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Motivational Interviewing is, however, distinct from client-centered counseling in that it allows interviewers to offer their perspective concerning positive changes clients could pursue (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Miller and Rollnick (2013) see the role of the MI interviewer residing in the middle ground between the “following” style of client-centered therapy and the “directive” style of behaviorism; they encourage MI interviewers to see themselves as “guides” (p. 4).

In discussing the practice of this counseling style, Miller and Rollnick (2013) first emphasize the Spirit of MI, arguing that sessions are ineffective if interviewers fail to embrace the model’s foundational mindset. They define the Spirit of MI as being marked by four characteristics in the relationship between the client and interviewer: acceptance, collaboration, evocation, and compassion. Interviewers should be person-centered guides who avoid “the righting reflex,” the desire inherent in many counselors compelling them to fix clients’ problems instead of evoking clients’ own motivation to change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, pp. 5-6).

Once interviewers have embraced the Spirit of MI, their overarching mission is to encourage change talk and limit sustain talk (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; see Table 1. A basic principle of the MI approach is that people are more likely to do things they talk about doing as opposed to things others try to convince them to do (Herman et al., 2014). MI interviewers, then, encourage clients to describe their vision of what it would be like



to make positive changes and discourage them from discussing what it would be like to continue with the status quo. To accomplish this, Miller and Rollnick (2013) recommend the use of four core skills throughout the process: open-ended questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summaries.

Table 1

*Common MI Techniques*

MI Technique	Definition
Open-Ended Question	Question that elicits a response beyond “yes” or “no”
Simple Reflection	Statement conveying understanding of what a client has said
Complex Reflection	Statement adding meaning or emphasis what a client has said
Affirmation	Statement recognizing positive characteristics and actions of a client
Summary	Reflection that combines several statements by a client
Autonomy	Statement or question that honors a client’s personal freedom
Evoking Change Talk	Statement or question that elicits a client’s own motivation to change
Limiting Sustain Talk	Statement or question that decreases a client’s rumination on the status quo

*Note.* Definitions drawn from Miller and Rollnick (2013)

The journey of helping clients move from ambivalence to change is marked by four processes: engaging in a strong relationship with clients, focusing clients’ desires on one change, evoking change talk about the change, and planning practical steps to make the change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The creators of MI claim that it can be effective in very small doses (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Several clinical trials provide evidence that MI makes a meaningful difference, even when employed in only a handful of sessions or a single session (Bernstein et al., 2005; Nock & Kazdin, 2005; Rubak, Sandbaek, Lauritzen, & Christensen, 2005). Miller and Rollnick (2013) use the metaphor of playing

a piano to discuss the amount of time clients need to be influenced by MI. Playing the piano for even a few minutes can produce a song, but the most powerful piano piece is a prolonged concerto. In other words, the more MI sessions a client receives along the road to change, the better.

### **Empirical Evidence**

**In general and with adolescents.** Miller and Rollnick created MI in the late 1980s as an addiction treatment. Many studies have provided positive evidence relative to its effectiveness in helping clients with a myriad of addictions including alcohol, narcotics, and tobacco (Bernstein et al., 2005; D'Amico et al., 2008; Herman & Fahnländer, 2003; Miller et al., 1988; Peterson et al., 2009). Researchers have also provided support for its usefulness in the fields of medical care (Armstrong et al., 2011; Gowers et al., 2007; West et al., 2007) and social work (Musser et al., 2008; Nock & Kazdin, 2005). Many studies lend evidence to MI's effectiveness with adolescents in a number of areas including substance use, depression, and self-harm (Barnett, Sussman, Smith, Rohrbach, & Spruijt-Metz, 2012; Brody, 2009; Kamen, 2009).

**In schools.** From the early days of MI, some argued that MI would likely be effective in the school setting (McNamara, 1992). The use of MI made theoretical sense given that motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, has been linked to academic success (Lau & Roeser, 2002). Though scholars continued to promote the theoretical fit of MI in schools to support students academically and behaviorally (Frey et al., 2011; Cross, Runions, Resnicow, Britt, & Gray, 2018; Herman et al., 2014; Lambie, 2004; McNamara, 2009, 2014; Naar-King & Suarez, 2011; Rollnick et al., 2016; Sink, 2011; Stoltz & Young, 2012), momentum for studying MI in educational settings has been slow

to build. Two research teams, one from the United Kingdom and one from the United States, have conducted the majority of the MI studies focused on schools.

*Qualitative research.* In the United Kingdom, McNamara (1992, 2009, 2014) and his writing partners laid the theoretical groundwork for MI in schools. Cathy Atkinson and her colleagues have conducted a number of qualitative studies on the topic. Atkinson and Woods (2003) designed a study to consider how effective and practical MI might be in the secondary school setting, particularly when used by educational psychologists (EPs) with disaffected students (e.g., students with negative attitudes and beliefs about school that lead to behavioral disruptions and low achievement). Three students participated in the study, but the final report included a case study of only one of the students. Atkinson provided one-hour MI sessions on a weekly basis for five weeks, though the authors acknowledged that EPs may not be able to provide such an intense level of support. During the MI sessions, Atkinson used the Menu of Strategies (See Appendix A; Rollnick, Heather, & Bell, 1992), a collection of potential interventions based on clients' Stage of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986). Using the Myself as Learner Scale (MALS), the Pupils Feelings about School and School Work (PFSSW), an interview and evaluation form from the referring teacher, and transcriptions of the MI sessions, Atkinson and Woods (2003) determined that the student's outcomes were positive. The student's scores increased on the MALS and PFSSW, though not as much as the researchers expected. Additionally, the teacher reported positive changes in attitude and confidence. Atkinson and Woods (2003) concluded that the student moved forward on the Stages of Change. One of the most glaring issues with this study was the authors' acknowledgment that they used Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)

techniques along with MI. They gave no explanation of the decision to do so or the quantity of time they used SFBT as compared to MI, making it unclear how much of the positive results should be attributed to MI versus SFBT. The researchers also failed to use a MI fidelity measure, making it impossible to ascertain how closely they followed MI principles.

In another case study, Atkinson and Amesu (2007) worked with a twelve-year-old boy with significant behavioral and attendance issues. Researchers provided the student with daily twenty-minute MI sessions when he arrived at school. The sessions typically included some discussion originating in the Menu of Strategies (See Appendix A; Rollnick et al., 1992). Researchers recorded the sessions, tracked the student's attendance, and interviewed his teacher. Results indicated that the student's attendance dramatically increased to the point that he attended almost daily. His teacher gave positive behavioral reports, and the student reported feeling much better about his ability to stay on task. Unfortunately, as with the previous study, the researchers used a combination of MI and SFBT techniques, thereby making it impossible to determine the discrete impact of MI. Similar to the previous study, researchers failed to use a MI fidelity measure. Additionally, providing sessions on a daily basis would not likely be possible for school staff, which makes the results somewhat unhelpful in a practical sense.

Kittles and Atkinson (2009) continued the qualitative approach to consider the effectiveness of MI as an assessment and consultation tool. Three disaffected students, ages 13 to 15, participated in the study. Kittles, an EP intern, provided one MI session for each student that included the Menu of Strategies (Rollnick et al., 1992) and an

explanation of the Stages of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986) for the purpose of creating an action plan. The researchers later sent a letter to the participating students reminding them of their action plans. Researchers interviewed students immediately following sessions. Participants felt that MI helped them think through issues related to their attitudes and behaviors. The researchers found MI to be helpful in that it provided an assessment of students' readiness to change and, through the Menu of Strategies (Rollnick et al., 1992), gave students the power to choose their own interventions. With regard to limitations, researchers failed to use a MI fidelity measure. Additionally, as the authors acknowledged, students were likely reticent to give negative feedback to the EP intern who conducted both the sessions and the interviews.

Cryer and Atkinson (2015) conducted a study in which the lone participant was a 10-year-old boy who was chosen due to his social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties. Cryer provided four 45- to 60-minute sessions that were based, in part, on the Menu of Strategies (Rollnick et al., 1992). Researchers gathered results using session transcriptions, a student interview, pre- and post-intervention interviews with the teacher, observational field notes, and a researcher-created form to check for MI fidelity. They found that the student's learning motivation increased, and negative behavior decreased. Cryer, the MI interviewer, found it important to alter MI techniques, rendering them, in her view, more age-appropriate for a primary student. In fact, she argued that the effectiveness of MI may be dependent on the interviewer's ability to do so. One limitation of the study was that the student mentioned the importance of the relationship with the facilitator, making it difficult to discern how much of the results were due to MI techniques versus those obtained due to the rapport built between student and facilitator.

Additionally, the researchers should have used a MI fidelity measure with known validity and reliability.

In another study, Snape and Atkinson (2015) used a mixed method design to investigate the effectiveness of MI in the secondary school setting when administered by school-based paraprofessionals. Participants included five paraprofessionals as well as five disaffected students. Paraprofessionals provided weekly MI sessions for five weeks which were based on the Menu of Strategies (Rollnick et al., 1992). Researchers gathered data using the PFSSW and a post-intervention focus group with the paraprofessionals. PFSSW results showed that three students' motivation increased moderately while two students' motivation decreased slightly. Paraprofessionals appreciated that MI gave students the opportunity to think critically about their behavior and its effect on the future. They also reported that MI provided techniques to build stronger relationships with students. Conversely, paraprofessionals were concerned that they typically would have insufficient time to provide MI sessions, given their numerous responsibilities. Concerning limitations, the researchers noted that they checked for fidelity, but they did not explain in what manner. This was especially a problem in this particular study because paraprofessionals with only 90 minutes of training were providing MI sessions. Additionally, researchers did not interview students or teachers. Such data would have been helpful, especially from teachers, as they were in the best position to know whether students' academic and behavioral motivation had improved.

In the most recent qualitative study regarding the use of MI in schools, Snape and Atkinson (2017) used a mixed method design to investigate disaffected students' views of the effectiveness of MI. Those involved in the study included three educational

psychologists (EPs) providing the MI sessions to three students, ages 11 to 13. Students received five or six weekly MI sessions conducted in the same format as the research team's previous studies. Students completed the PFSSW pre-intervention, post-intervention, and three months following completion of the intervention. Researchers also interviewed students immediately post-intervention as well as three months later. Results from interviews and PFSSW data were inconsistent. During interviews, all three students reported greater enthusiasm for academic achievement and improved classroom behavior. PFSSW results, however, did not reflect the same outcomes. Snape and Atkinson acknowledged the ambiguity of the results and questioned the validity and reliability of the PFSSW, as other studies (Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Snape & Atkinson, 2015) yielded some level of discrepancy between the scale results and participant interviews.

Recently, Pincus (2018) conducted a heuristic phenomenological qualitative study in the United States in which he interviewed practicing secondary school counselors ( $n = 9$ ) about their experiences using MI with students. The researcher found that all school counselors in the study believed MI helped students with academic issues while the majority also found MI to be useful when assisting students with non-academic topics including substance abuse, behavioral issues, and truancy. Those participants who chose not to use MI for non-academic issues were concerned about time constraints and their competency to address issues potentially outside their scope of practice. Pincus also found that many respondents felt inadequately trained in their SCPPs and noted the need for school counselors to receive more MI training. Limitations of the study included sampling that consisted solely of secondary school counselors who were members of

ASCA as well as his own potential bias as a school counselor who found MI to be effective.

*Quantitative research.* In the United States, a number of authors have recommended that MI be implemented in schools (Herman et al., 2014; Lambie, 2004; Rollnick et al., 2016; Sink, 2011; Stoltz & Young, 2012). Most of the research, though, has been conducted by one team led by Gill Strait and John Terry. Unlike researchers in the United Kingdom, this team has focused on quantitative research. Strait et al. (2012) conducted a randomized experimental study in which they tested the efficacy of MI in promoting positive academic outcomes with middle school students. Researchers randomly assigned 103 middle school students to either a MI group or a waitlist group. The MI group received one 50-minute session, called “Academic Report Card Coaching,” consisting of four phases: introduction, self-assessment, support/feedback, and change plan development. The graduate students providing the sessions had previously received general MI training as well as 90 minutes of training specific to this study. During the MI sessions, students received a normative feedback worksheet, a graphical feedback sheet, and a goal sheet. MI interviewers also asked students to sign a public commitment poster once they developed a change plan. Researchers gathered self-report data from students regarding participation in class, homework completion, and academic self-efficacy. They combined data from participation and homework completion to create a separate outcome variable called positive academic behavior. Researchers also tracked academic performance in the form of quarter grades in math, English, history, and science. Results indicated that math grades increased significantly ( $p < .05$ ,  $d = .47$ ). Students also reported significantly improved class participation ( $p <$



.05,  $d = .32$ ) and positive academic behavior ( $p < .05$ ,  $d = .38$ ). Although results were encouraging, researchers struggled to explain why only math grades increased significantly. They also failed to explain their rationale in creating the positive academic behavior variable. Finally, Strait et al. (2012) stated that they checked for MI fidelity, but they provided no description of their method.

Encouraged by the positive results of the first study, Terry, Smith, Strait, and McQuillin (2013) replicated the study at the same school with different participants. Forty-nine middle school students received MI via the same basic protocol as had the students in the previous study. However, these students received sessions during fall semester rather than in the spring semester, thereby enhancing control for history effects. As with the previous study, students' math grades significantly improved ( $p < .05$ ,  $d = .36$ ). Unlike Strait et al. (2012), however, class participation and positive academic behavior were not significantly different. The authors argued that the lack of significant difference was, in part, due to the lower statistical power given the smaller sample size. Effect sizes were similar in this study, though somewhat lower than the previous study (class participation:  $d = .25$ , positive academic behavior:  $d = .15$ ). Limitations of the previous study applied to this replication.

Having detected preliminary evidence of the effectiveness of a single MI session, Terry, Strait, McQuillin, and Smith (2014) next investigated the effect of two MI sessions as compared to one. Researchers divided 42 middle school students into two groups: one consisted of students who received two MI sessions and one comprised of students who received one MI session. Researchers tracked quarter grades in math, English, science, and history. They also tracked academic self-efficacy using the Children's Perceived

Self-Efficacy Scale, school engagement using the Student Engagement and Motivation Questionnaire, life satisfaction using the Life Satisfaction Scale, and academic motivation using the School Motivation and Learning Strategies Inventory. Interviewers included three graduate students and three undergraduate research specialists. Students who received one MI session had essentially the same experience as students in the experimental groups of the previous studies (Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013). Students in both MI groups received the same first session. Students in the two-session MI group received a second session during which they reviewed their goals, edited their plans, and discussed why they wanted to make positive academic changes. In the interim period between the first and second sessions, students received goal progress worksheets every two weeks, reminding them of their goals and informing them of their current grades. Results showed significant dosage effects in math ( $p < .05$ ,  $d = .55$ ), science ( $p < .05$ ,  $d = .58$ ), and history ( $p < .05$ ,  $d = .47$ ), though none were realized in English. Results of the inventories were not significantly different. Concerning limitations, the researchers should have included a group who received no MI whatsoever, thereby illuminating the differences among no MI sessions, one MI session, and two MI sessions. Additionally, researchers should not have circulated goal progress worksheets every two weeks between the first and second MI sessions. This is not a typical aspect of MI and, as such, acts as a confounding variable. In other words, it is impossible to know how much of the dosage effect might be attributable to the second MI session versus the bi-weekly goal progress worksheets. Finally, this study occurred at the same school as the previous studies, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results.

In their most recent study, the research team investigated the effect of a single MI session when administered by paraprofessionals (Strait et al., 2017). Researchers randomly divided 88 middle school students into a MI group and a waitlist group. After receiving four training sessions and having passed roleplay tests, undergraduate psychology students conducted the MI sessions. Although the researchers changed the name of the single-session intervention from Academic Report Card Coaching to the Student Check-Up (SCU), the methods employed were essentially the same as the previous studies (Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014) except that students received a goal progress worksheet two weeks after their MI session. This mirrored the protocol used with the two-session group did in Terry et al., 2014. To assess fidelity, paraprofessionals (i.e., the undergraduates providing the MI sessions) completed questionnaires at the end of each session indicating whether they followed the SCU plan and used MI techniques. The researchers tracked math, English, and science quarter grades as well as self-reported academic self-efficacy, class participation, homework completion, and positive academic behavior. Results indicated that neither grades nor other variables were significantly different. A significant limitation of the study was that the research team used undergraduate students as paraprofessionals as opposed to using paraprofessional educators with experience working in schools. Secondly, the fact that researchers disseminated goal progress worksheets two weeks after the SCU introduced a confounding variable in the same way that it did in the dosage effect study (Terry et al., 2014). Finally, this study was the first to be conducted in a different school. The fact that results were not significant raises the question of whether the positive results in the previous studies were a product of the environment or of the MI interventions.

Aside from the studies conducted by the research team led by Strait and Terry, Ratanavivan and Ricard (2018) conducted a quantitative study in which they used a multiple single-case research design to assess the impact of MI on the behavior of elementary students in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP). The researchers recruited 15 students, grades 3 to 5, 80% of which were boys and 73% of which were of Latino descent. Students received 45- to 50-minute MI sessions over six consecutive school days. Researchers measured students' classroom behavior using a daily progress report (DPR) completed by teachers. They also tracked students' self-report of readiness to change and verbal indicators of change to discern whether increased discussion about change was related to behavior change. Researchers used a Tau-U effect size to compare participants' DPR scores during a four-day baseline period and a six-day treatment period. The overall effect size was a moderate .33 with a range of individual effect sizes from -.17 to .75. Other data loosely indicated that students who provided more change talk were more likely to alter their classroom behavior. The study suffered from a number of weaknesses. First, providing six MI sessions in consecutive days is not likely feasible in most school settings, even DAEPs. Secondly, the authors failed to use a MI treatment fidelity scale. Thirdly, the authors did not provide post-intervention data, so there is no verifiable way to discern if the intense, six-day intervention had a lasting effect. Fourth, the DPR used to track student behavior had no psychometric data to verify its validity or reliability. Finally, the convenience sample drawn from one DAEP makes the generalizability of the results questionable.

### **MI and School Counselors**

**Theoretical and practical fit.** School counselors need efficient and productive therapeutic techniques to help struggling students (Ziomek-Daigle, Goodman-Scott, Cavin, & Donohue, 2016). From a theoretical perspective, MI's foundation in client-centered therapy, along with its semi-directive style, aligns with school counselors' responsibility to support students' self-determination while also guiding them toward a positive future (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; Sink, 2011). From a practical perspective, MI seems as if it would be a useful tool for school counselors, as research suggests that it is both effective and efficient. In an assessment of the most potent means of behavior change, Embry and Biglan (2008) argued that MI was one of the most time-efficient. In a seminal study, a research team comparing the effectiveness of various counseling methods found that four MI sessions had a similar effect as did twelve sessions of cognitive-behavioral therapy and 12-step methods (Project MATCH Research Group, 1997). A highly-efficient intervention such as MI would be of great benefit to school counselors, as their large caseloads make long-term interventions difficult. Additionally, MI provides the opportunity for students to exercise their autonomy and abstract thought by considering what change would look like and how they might achieve it. Though limited, research regarding MI in schools is encouraging.

The above discussion of the theoretical roots, clinical practice, and empirical evidence of MI suggests that it has potential to be a useful tool for school counselors. This conclusion must remain tentative, however, because MI research specific to school counseling is severely limited.

### **MI Training**

At present, there is no official MI training process, nor is there an official certification for MI trainers due to the fact that MI is not a trademarked term (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The creators of MI, however, did establish a non-profit organization known as the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT) which consists of members who have been trained by other MINT trainers to provide high-quality MI training (MINT, 2013). To become a MINT trainer, applicants must attend two workshops led by a MINT trainer, receive individual coaching from a MINT trainer, and attend a Training of New Trainers workshop (MINT, 2013). Although the process of becoming a MINT trainer is rigorous, the lack of a singular MI training curriculum suggests that the experience of being trained in MI varies even when being trained by MINT trainers. Miller and Rollnick (2013) reported that the ideal progression of MI training would include a two- to three-day introductory workshop, a two- to three-day intermediate/advanced workshop, and individual or group coaching sessions.

Several research teams have investigated various methods of providing MI training. Baer et al. (2004) conducted a study evaluating the effectiveness of a two-day workshop conducted by two MINT members who were training addiction and mental health clinicians. Using a MI fidelity measure called the Motivational Interviewing Skills Code (MISC), researchers found that participants' MI skills significantly increased immediately following the training. However, many of the positive gains disappeared within the two months following the workshop, leading the authors to suggest that MI skills acquired solely through a workshop eroded over time.

In another study, Miller, Yahne, Moyers, Martinez, and Pirritano (2004) investigated how results from MI training differed when feedback and/or coaching were

added to the workshop experience. Researchers measured participants' MI abilities using the MISC fidelity scale one week, four months, eight months, and twelve months after the various training procedures. In discussing results, the authors mentioned their surprise in the large effect of the workshop on all groups. They noted, however, that the effect regressed within four months and, in the absence of accompanying feedback and/or coaching, eventually became insignificant. The authors suggested that, to achieve the best possible results (i.e., increased change talk and decreased sustain talk), MI training should include a workshop, feedback, and coaching.

In a meta-analysis of various MI training techniques, Schwalbe, Oh, and Zweben (2014) found that, overall, workshops yielded gains in MI skills, as seen in effect sizes ( $d = .76$ ). Results of studies not including feedback and/or coaching after workshops reflected an erosion of participants' MI skills over time ( $d = -.30$ ), while studies that did include feedback and/or coaching indicated that participants' skills were sustained over time. Ultimately, Schwalbe et al. (2014) argued that three to four feedback and/or coaching sessions spanning the six-month period following workshops are generally necessary to support trainee retention of skills.

In summary, the above studies provided evidence that MI workshops were effective in increasing MI skills in the short-term, although much of the gains diminished over time. Miller et al. (2004) and Schwalbe et al. (2014) found evidence that feedback and/or coaching provided during the period following MI workshops sustained the increase in MI skill over time.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The goal of this study was to investigate how SCPPs train SCTs to use MI. The preceding literature review examined SCPPs and MI, with particular interest in the use of MI in schools. SCPPs developed as school counseling evolved from being a teacher's auxiliary responsibility to being a profession of its own. Modern SCPPs require a significant amount of graduate coursework as well as fieldwork in the form of a practicum and internship. The requirements and recommendations of professional organizations such as CACREP and ASCA as well as the impact of state laws provide a framework for SCPPs' core curriculum. Researchers investigating the general effectiveness of SCPPs have uncovered ambiguous results (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011; Schayot, 2008; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Kolodinsky et al., 2009). Concerning the results of clinical preparation in SCPPs, limited research suggests that school counselors perceived themselves to be insufficiently prepared and desired more extensive training (Allen et al., 2002; Bore et al., 2010; Burrow-Sanchez & Lopez, 2009; Burrow-Sanchez et al., 2008; Carlson & Kees, 2013; Walley & Grothaus, 2013).

MI is a counseling style based on the premise that counselors can help clients cultivate their intrinsic desire to make positive changes in their lives (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Many researchers have conducted studies lending evidence to MI's effectiveness in a number of areas (Armstrong et al., 2011; Bernstein et al., 2005; D'Amico et al., 2008; Gowers et al., 2007; Herman & Fahnlander, 2003; Miller et al., 1988; Musser et al., 2008; Nock & Kazdin, 2005; Peterson et al., 2009; West et al., 2007) and with various age groups including adolescents (Barnett et al., 2012; Brody, 2009; Kamen, 2009). With regard to the use of MI in schools, many scholars have theorized that using MI with students may lead to positive academic and behavioral outcomes (Frey et al., 2011;



Herman et al., 2014; Lambie, 2004; McNamara, 2009, 2014; Naar-King & Suarez, 2011; Rollnick et al., 2016; Sink, 2011; Stoltz & Young, 2012). Researchers in the United Kingdom have conducted a number of qualitative studies on the topic and have discovered generally positive results in the areas of academic achievement and classroom behavior (Atkinson & Amosu, 2007; Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Snape & Atkinson 2015; Snape & Atkinson, 2017). Meanwhile, researchers in the United States have conducted quantitative studies on the use of MI in schools and have discerned that, in general, students' academic achievement improved, particularly in math (Strait et al., 2012; Strait et al., 2017; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014).

Given the largely positive results regarding the use of MI in schools, it seems reasonable to consider how MI might best be provided to students. Most schools already have mental health professionals on staff in the form of school counselors. MI seems to be a good theoretical and practical fit for use by school counselors. For school counselors to effectively use MI with students, they must be well-trained. Such training would likely predominantly occur during school counselors' SCPPs. Thus, it is important to investigate how SCPPs are currently training SCTs to use MI in schools.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Procedure**

The following chapter discusses those procedures used by the researchers to investigate Motivational Interviewing (MI) training in School Counselor Preparation Programs (SCPPs).

#### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore how counselor educators in SCPPs train school counselor trainees (SCTs) to use MI. Using a multiple case study design, the primary researcher sought to discover themes that might be beneficial to SCPP stakeholders in evaluating their programs relative to MI training for SCTs.

Aligning with the purpose of this study, the central research question for the project was as follows:

- How do counselor educators in SCPPs train SCTs to use MI?

While investigating the central research question, the primary researcher also addressed sub-questions related to the purpose of the study. These sub-questions included:

- What is the format of MI training at various SCPPs?
- How did SCPPs' MI training come to be, how has it evolved over time, and how do counselor educators expect it to change in the future?
- On which MI ideas or techniques do counselor educators focus more or less?
- Which MI ideas or techniques are the easiest or hardest for SCTs to become competent using?

- Which training techniques do counselor educators find most effective?
- How do counselor educators evaluate SCTs' ability to use MI?
- How do counselor educators prepare themselves to train SCTs to use MI?
- What challenges do counselor educators face in training SCTs to use MI?

As is typical in research, this study was limited in its scope. It represented an attempt to understand MI training within SCPPs, not an attempt to measure the quality of the MI training. The data retrieved during the course of this study was bound to the particular point in time when the primary researcher gathered it; SCPPs may have changed their MI training protocol at any time following the study.

### **Research Design**

#### **Qualitative Research**

The primary researcher used a qualitative design to examine the above research questions. Qualitative techniques were appropriate for this study because the researcher sought to observe what was occurring in a particular place and time and to make those findings visible for the purpose of consideration (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As is evident in the above research questions, the researcher was interested in asking “how” and “why” questions regarding MI training in SCPPs. Qualitative methods are designed for exactly these types of questions (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017). Additionally, researchers utilize qualitative research when studying subjects that are embedded in highly contextualized situations (Creswell & Poth, 2017). MI training within SCPPs certainly fits this description, as influences such as instructors, SCTs, and curricula routinely alter its composition.

Researchers find utility in the complex picture that can emerge while using qualitative research methods (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This is particularly the case with educational research because educational contexts are so dynamic (Berliner, 2002). Educational settings are far-removed from the stability of laboratories. This study's primary researcher sought to uncover results exhibiting a level of complexity befitting qualitative research methods.

### **Case Study Method**

The primary researcher used a particular type of qualitative research called a case study. Researchers conduct case studies when they seek to deeply understand particular cases within their multi-dimensional contexts (Yin, 2017). Case study methods are particularly useful when the case and the context within which the case exists are intimately intertwined (Yin, 2017). This was certainly the situation in this study, as SCPPs are, in some sense, simultaneously cases and contexts. Unlike quantitative researchers who hope to separate a phenomenon from its context, this study's primary researcher embraced both case and context (Yin, 2017).

The primary researcher chose a multiple case study approach. When researchers use a multiple case study design, they gather data applicable to the research questions from at least two cases and compare them (Yin, 2017). In this study, the researchers examined the MI training of multiple SCPPs to unearth cross-case themes. Yin (2017) recommended multiple case study designs over single case studies because of the significant analytical benefit gained in comparing data from multiple sources. In effect, the multiple case study design provides built-in replication and more powerful results (Yin, 2017).

### **Sampling Procedure**

According to Creswell and Poth (2017), all sampling in qualitative research should be purposeful; that is, researchers should choose cases that fit the research design and help answer the research questions. Creswell and Poth (2017) argued that researchers need to consider two aspects of purposeful sampling: what sampling strategy to use and what number of cases to study. Creswell and Poth (2017) as well as Yin (2017) have acknowledged, however, that researchers, with regard to sampling strategy, must strike a balance between ideal cases and available cases. In other words, it is appropriate for qualitative researchers to use a convenience sample as long as those subjects to whom researchers have ready access can provide relevant data to the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017).

With reference to the number of cases, Creswell and Poth (2017) pointed out that, with qualitative research, the goal is not to draw a representative sample but to collect data from particular subjects. The number of cases is not as important as the quality of data (Creswell & Poth, 2017). When using a multiple case study design, Creswell and Poth (2017) recommended a sample of no more than four or five. In general, the more cases researchers study, the less in-depth data they unearth about the individual cases (Creswell & Poth, 2017). For this reason, Wolcott (1994) actually argued that any case study with more than one case includes diluted data.

In this particular project, the primary researcher investigated three SCPPs by interviewing one participant at each university, examining syllabi, and exploring textbooks. In so doing, the researcher attempted to balance the need to gather diverse perspectives while also accumulating rich data. The SCPPs involved in the study were a

convenience sample. The primary researcher recruited participants by sending an email to the Counselor Education and Supervision Network, a listserv that provides a forum for its members to discuss issues and share resources related to counselor education (CESNET, 2017). The manager of CESNET approximates that 3,400 counselor educators, doctoral students, practicing counselors, and supervisors utilize the listserv (CESNET, 2017). The researcher sent an email to CESNET explaining the purpose of the study, the criteria for participation, and the offer of a \$25 gift of appreciation to participants (see Appendix B for the full text of the email). Minimum criteria for participation in the study included teaching in a SCPP that trained SCTs to use MI. Counselor educators from five SCPPs responded to the request. The primary researcher interviewed each potential participant via email and found that all met the minimum criteria for participation. The researcher then excluded one potential participant because instructors at his/her SCPP were in the early stages of integrating MI into their program and excluded another because the researcher had provided MI training for his/her SCPP in the past.

After narrowing the potential participants to three, the primary researcher invited them to participate in the study using email communication that included a formal invitation and informed consent (see Appendix C). In both email communication and formal invitation, the researcher assured participants of their personal confidentiality as well as the confidentiality of their SCPP. To preserve confidentiality of participants and cases, the researcher refrained from citing SCPP websites when providing demographic data and other potentially identifying information in the following Results section.

### **Description of Cases and Participants**

The following is a description of the SCPPs represented in the study as well as the counselor educators interviewed by the primary researcher. The SCPPs varied in a number of characteristics, as illustrated in Table 2. The counselor educators who lent insight into their particular SCPPs had distinct career experience, as delineated in Table 3.

### **SCPP A and Participant A**

SCPP A, the first case in the study, was part of a public university in the Southeastern region of the United States with a total enrollment of approximately 11,000 students (see Table 2).<sup>2</sup> It is a CACREP-accredited program requiring SCTs to complete 60 credits and 700 hours of fieldwork (100 hours in practicum, 600 hours in internship). SCTs who took a full-time course load typically completed the program in three years. The SCPP was relatively large, with approximately 45 SCTs who were not organized into cohorts. The SCPP was part of its university's Department of Human Health Sciences that also included the College of Nursing. SCTs who attended SCPP A earned a Master of Science in Counseling with a concentration in School Counseling. For many of their courses, SCTs were in classes alongside others whose concentrations were Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy. SCTs completed four courses specific to them: Consultation, Advanced School Counseling, Practicum, and Internship.<sup>3</sup> Five of the program's courses included varying amounts of MI training: Counseling Theories, Counseling Techniques, Addictions Counseling, Practicum, and Internship (see Table 3).

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<sup>2</sup> The author did not cite source material for SCPP information so as to ensure the confidentiality of the participants.

<sup>3</sup> The researcher used generic names for courses so as to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Table 2

*Description of School Counselor Preparation Programs*

	SCPP A	SCPP B	SCPP C
Type of University	Public	Public	Public
Location	Southeast USA	Midwest USA	East Coast USA
Enrollment	11,000	10,000	11,000
# of SCTs	~45	~25	~30
CACREP Accreditation	Yes	Yes	Yes
# of Credits	60	60	60
Length of Program (full-time)	3 years	3-3.5 years	2-3 years
# of SCPP-Specific Courses	4	3	1
Courses with MI in Curriculum	5	4	3

Table 3

*Courses that Included MI Training*

	SCPP A	SCPP B	SCPP C
Counseling Theories and Techniques <sup>a</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Career Counseling	No	Yes	No
Child and Adolescent Counseling	No	No	Yes
Addictions Counseling	Yes	No	Yes
Practicum	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>b</sup>
Internship	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>SCPP A divides these into two classes, both of which include MI. <sup>b</sup>Participant C indicated that MI Training was not included in SCPP C's curriculum for Practicum or Internship classes, but SCTs received feedback on MI skills if they used them during their taped sessions with students.



To understand the MI training provided in SCPP A, the primary researcher interviewed Participant A, a counselor educator who taught courses in the program. Prior to being a university instructor, Participant A served as a school counselor for 19 years (see Table 4). She had been a counselor educator for two years, all at SCPP A. Participant A reported that she loved being a part of SCPP A and the university. She experienced a steep learning curve when she joined academia, but she stated that her teaching abilities have gotten “exceptionally better.” Concerning her theoretical orientation, Participant A reported that she used an integrative style, though she leaned most heavily toward Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Additionally, she used quite a few Solution-Focused Brief Therapy techniques and viewed her clients and SCTs in a person-centered way.

Table 4

*Description of Counselor Educators*

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Experience as University Instructor	2 years	6 years	7.5 years
Experience at Current SCPP	2 years	6 years	2.5 years
Experience as School Counselor	19 years	17 years	10 years
Courses Taught with MI in Curriculum	5	4	3

**SCPP B and Participant B**

SCPP B was part of a public university in the Midwest region of the United States with an enrollment of approximately 10,000. SCPP B is a CACREP-accredited program during which SCTs completed 60 credits and 700 fieldwork hours (100 in practicum, 600

in internship). Full-time SCTs required three to three-and-one-half years to complete the program. SCPP B included approximately 25 SCTs who were not organized in a cohort model. SCTs earned a Master of Science in School Counseling and took many of their courses with Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Marriage and Family Therapy trainees. Three courses were specific to SCTs: Ethics for School Counselors, Practicum, and Internship. Four courses included MI in the curriculum: Counseling Theories and Techniques, Group Counseling, Career Counseling, and Practicum.

Participant B was an instructor with SCPP B who agreed to participate in the study. Prior to becoming a counselor educator, Participant B spent 17 years as a middle school counselor, all at the same school. Before becoming a school counselor, Participant B worked as a therapist in elementary and middle school settings and trained others who did the same. Additionally, she trained staff at every school in her county to implement peer mediation programs. Once she became a school counselor, Participant B implemented a peer mediation program in her own school. She also successfully advocated before the school board to have mental health counselors placed in her school, a practice which later spread to every school in the district. Participant B described her theoretical orientation as multimodal with a heavy emphasis on Systems Theory.

### **SCPP C and Participant C**

SCPP C was located in a public university on the East Coast of the United States with an enrollment of approximately 11,000 students. The program is CACREP-accredited and required SCTs to complete 60 credits and 750 fieldwork hours (150 in practicum, 600 in internship). SCTs typically completed the program in two to three years, dependent on course load. Approximately 30 SCTs were enrolled in SCPP C and

were organized into cohorts. SCTs seeking a Master of Arts in Education with a focus in School Counseling, completing most of their courses with Clinical Mental Health Counseling trainees. SCPP C's enrollment had dropped in the recent past due to their state government's decision to cut educators' salaries, causing existing educators to leave the state and prospective school counselors to choose other helping professions. SCTs in SCPP C took one school-counseling-specific course: School Counseling Program Development. Courses with MI integrated into the curriculum included Counseling Theories and Techniques, Child and Adolescent Counseling, and Addictions Counseling.

Participant C, a counselor educator in SCPP C, agreed to take part in the study and provide insight into the program's MI training. Prior to becoming a counselor educator, Participant C spent 10 years as a school counselor. At the time of the study, Participant C had been a counselor educator for seven-and-one-half years, two-and-one-half of which were spent at SCPP C. Concerning theoretical orientation, Participant C preferred person-centered and body-centered approaches.

Participant C was unique among the study's participants in that she was a member of MINT (2013) and, as such, had received a significant amount of training in the use of MI and had trained others in its implementation (see Pursued Own Training section in the Results chapter for a more thorough description of Participant C's training). In addition to her work at SCPP C, Participant C occasionally trained those in helping professions to use MI, including school counselors and other school staff. This study's primary researcher received training from Participant C at a Training New Trainers conference sponsored by MINT.

### **The Role of the Primary Researcher**

With qualitative designs, researchers are central instruments in data collection and interpretation procedures (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Researchers' cultural background, gender, professional history, and personal experiences can impact what data they pursue, how they interpret the data, and how participants respond to them (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Accordingly, it is important for researchers to describe their position within particular research projects (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The primary researcher for this project was connected to the study's topic in a number of ways. The researcher regularly uses MI in his practice as a school counselor and believes in its effectiveness. The researcher chose to pursue MI training outside of the SCPP in which he was trained and spent personal money and vacation time toward that end. This additional training included a two-day introductory workshop, a two-day advanced workshop, three individual coaching sessions spanning a nine-month period, and a two-day conference intended to help attendees train others to use MI. The researcher has a desire for school counselors and SCTs to be well-trained in MI. The researcher authored a book intended to help school counselors use MI in their daily practice (North, 2017), has trained school counselors to use MI at several conferences, and has been retained by a number of school districts to provide MI training for their school counselors. Additionally, the researcher has trained SCTs in several SCPPs to use MI.

The researcher was aware of his bias relative to the purpose of this study and initiated the project without an expectation or desire for a specific outcome, as Yin (2017) recommended to all researchers. As per the guidance of Creswell and Poth (2017),

the researcher strove to bracket his experiences and opinions regarding SCPPs and MI and followed the data where it led. The study's focus remained the participants, not the researcher.

### **Data Collection**

The study relied on two forms of data: interviews and documents.

#### **Interviews**

The primary researcher conducted an individual, semi-structured phone interview with a faculty member from each of the SCPPs. The participants included MI ideas and techniques in the curriculum of at least one of the courses they taught. The interviews, which spanned from 54 to 82 minutes, provided the bulk of the data for the study. The researcher typically followed the Interview Protocol found in Appendix D. The researcher recorded, transcribed, and reflected upon the interviews in field notes.

Concerning the creation of the Interview Protocol, the researcher's goal was to formulate a list of questions capable of garnering rich and deep information about the SCPPs' MI training procedures. Many of the questions paralleled the research questions guiding the study. The researcher utilized open-ended questions so as to allow the participants to provide more meaningful responses (Creswell & Poth, 2017). When appropriate, the researcher reflected the participants' answers so as to encourage them to provide greater depth of information (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Following Yin's (2017) recommendation, the interviews were fluid and not robotically tied to the prepared interview questions. However, the Interview Protocol provided the structure for the conversations such that the interviews were similar from case to case.

## **Documents**

In addition to interviewing instructors at the various SCPPs, the primary researcher examined documents pertaining to MI training received by SCTs. The researcher compared data from the documents with information from the interviews and searched for similarities and differences. Through triangulating data in this way, the researcher sought to increase the validity of the results (see Strategies for Validating Findings section for a more in-depth discussion of this topic; Creswell and Poth, 2017; Eisner, 1991; Lincoln & Guba; 1985; Yin, 2017). As Yin (2017) pointed out, it is important to remember that documents are not always accurate, so data drawn from them should not inherently overrule data from interviews.

**Syllabi.** The primary researcher inspected syllabi from SCPPs' courses that included MI training. The researcher reviewed the syllabi for descriptions of MI training and compared it to the training of other counseling theories and techniques.

**Textbooks.** The primary researcher reviewed textbooks used in SCPPs' courses that included MI training. Specifically, the researcher inspected the quantity and quality of information about MI included in the textbooks (see Table 6 for a summary of MI material in textbooks used by participants).

## **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process is, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), an act of uncovering "lessons to be learned" (p. 362). To perform data analysis, the primary researcher and research assistant utilized Microsoft Word to organize, code, and analyze data. To protect against data loss, the primary researcher created a master list of information gathered and maintained backup copies of all data using cloud storage and

hard drive storage. The primary researcher carefully masked the names of the interviewees and SCPPs so as to protect their identities.

According to Creswell and Poth (2017), there are three major aspects of analyzing data in a qualitative study: description of cases, analysis of themes, and representation of data.

### **Description of Cases**

It is vital to describe cases in a deep and rich way (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Earlier in this chapter, the primary researcher described in detail the participants and their contexts using data drawn from interviews and documents.

### **Analysis of Themes**

Qualitative researchers reduce the wealth of data they receive into themes by coding and then condensing common findings from interviews and other forms of data (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017). It is important to note that the practice of uncovering themes does not exist to simplify data but to better understand the complex cases being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

According to Creswell and Poth (2017), during the process of coding, researchers should tag all segments of data with at least one code and create a document for each code that draws together all pieces of data with that particular designation. To do so, researchers carefully inspect all statements from interviews and summarize their content into codes (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Saldana, 2013). Saldana (2013) recommended that researchers inspect interview transcriptions a second time to further categorize the data. As researchers work through the data and better understand the cases, they identify five to six themes that summarize the larger number of codes more succinctly (Creswell &

Poth, 2017). As specific codes and more general themes emerge, researchers should keep in mind that the strongest results are supported by multiple forms of evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It is important to note, though, that not all results need to span multiple cases or be mentioned several times by one case. Stake (1995) argued that some of the most insightful meaning can come from a single point of data. Additionally, Czarniawska (2004) encouraged researchers to pay attention to often-overlooked types of data including false dichotomies, silence, contradictions, and outliers.

The primary researcher recruited a research assistant to independently code transcripts, discuss emerging themes, and consult regarding the study's results. By involving a second coder, the primary researcher sought to increase validity and guard against bias (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The research assistant held a Master in Education and a Ph.D. in Counselor Education. Additionally, she had 24 years of experience as a school counselor. The research assistant had no prior connection to MI other than attending a 60-minute presentation on the subject at a conference. She was an expert in the Nurtured Heart Approach, a person-centered methodology intended to help children with challenging behaviors (Children's Success Foundation, 2018).

While analyzing the data, the researcher and research assistant followed the advice of the scholars previously mentioned in this section. During the first reading of the interview transcriptions, the researchers used descriptive coding (Wolcott, 1994) to summarize passages in words or short phrases. During the second review of the interviews, the researchers utilized pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which is a form of coding in which researchers group similar codes together into meta-codes. The researchers used code mapping to organize the codes into categories and the categories



into themes (Saldana, 2013). They conducted a cross-case analysis to detect common themes among the SCPPs with the intent of creating a final list of themes which accurately described the state of MI training at multiple SCPPs (see Results section).

### **Representation of Data**

After analyzing data, researchers present results in helpful and interesting ways (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Creswell and Poth (2017) recommended that researchers represent data in the form of a narrative. This narrative can include metaphors/analogies, tables, and visuals that reorganize the results into multiple forms for the audience's consideration (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Yin (2017) recommended using copious quotations and vignettes that allow the cases' voices to be heard. The primary researcher for this study followed the recommendations of these experts and reported the results using a number of visual representations (see Results section).

### **Strategies for Validating Findings**

Qualitative research can be just as rigorous as quantitative research, though researchers must take care to conduct a quality study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Eisner, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2017). Creswell and Poth (2017) argued that rigorous qualitative research validates the accuracy of the results in multiple ways including triangulation, member checking, consideration of disconfirming evidence, and explanation of researcher effects.

A number of scholars have recommended triangulation as a powerful validation strategy (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Eisner, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2017). Researchers triangulate when they confirm data by seeking it from multiple sources (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Yin (2017) stated that researchers are essentially studying their

topic multiple times by addressing it using different data sources; in effect, they are replicating the study. Regarding this project, the primary researcher used interviews as well as multiple types of documents to investigate MI training in SCPPs.

Another strategy for validating findings is member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017). Member checking can refer either to researchers sending participants a transcript of their interview and asking for corrections or inviting participants to read the Results section and provide feedback (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017). Creswell and Poth (2017) preferred the latter option, stating that it is important that participants give feedback about researchers' interpretation of the data. Yin (2017) argued that researchers have discretion regarding whether to change their interpretation of the data given participants' feedback (Yin, 2017). Concerning this study, the primary researcher gave participants the opportunity to evaluate a transcript of their interview as well as the Results and Discussion sections of this study.

A third strategy for validating findings is to acknowledge disconfirming evidence and consider contrary interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Eisner, 1991). Researchers should directly address rival explanations by either acknowledging that they are a possibility or providing evidence for rejecting them (Yin, 2017). Regarding the study at hand, the researchers were cognizant of disconfirming data and addressed rival explanations (see Results section).

A fourth strategy is inter-rater reliability via the involvement of a research assistant. By providing a second opinion about transcript coding, emerging themes, and final results, this study's research assistant likely increased validity and limited bias

(Creswell & Poth, 2017; See the beginning of Chapter Four for an explanation of how the researchers worked together to analyze data).

A final method of protecting against invalid findings involves researchers carefully explaining their place in the study and their own impact on the results (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The primary researcher discussed these issues in The Role of the Primary Researcher section above and in the Limitations section in Chapter Five.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As is typical in research, ethical considerations are paramount in qualitative studies (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A central aspect of ethical qualitative research is designing, conducting, and reporting a high-quality study that provides valid results (Creswell & Poth, 2017). As discussed in the Strategies for Validating Findings section, the primary researcher took a number of steps to report valid findings. A second characteristic of ethical qualitative research is the proper treatment of participants. Creswell and Poth (2017) recommended that researchers create a clear formal invitation that includes the purpose of the study, a description of participant involvement, the process of the study, and benefits that participants may expect. The primary researcher for this project followed Creswell and Poth's recommendations in the creation of the formal invitation found in Appendix C. A final aspect of ethical qualitative research involves protecting the identity of the participants if researchers promise them anonymity (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In order to protect the identities of those participating in the study, the primary researcher refrained from publishing the names of SCPPs or participants.

### Summary of Procedure

The goal of this study was to explore how counselor educators in SCPPs train SCTs to use MI. The primary researcher used a qualitative, multiple case study design to detect themes that may be beneficial to counselor educators as they train SCTs to use MI. Qualitative research was appropriate in this scenario because the primary researcher sought to answer “how” and “why” questions about MI training in SCPPs, which are highly contextualized settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017). The researcher used a multiple case study design to compare themes across several SCPPs (Yin, 2017). Specifically, the researcher interviewed counselor educators and examined textbooks and syllabi from three SCPPs, thereby providing data triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Eisner, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2017). Concerning sampling procedures, the researcher located participants using the CESNET listserv. The researcher described in detail the SCPPs and the counselor educators representing them. Regarding the role of the primary researcher, he regularly used MI in his own practice as a school counselor and trained other educators to do so, but he bracketed his experiences and opinions throughout the project (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

To analyze data, the primary researcher and research assistant inspected interviews, developed an initial list of codes, and summarized data into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Czarniawska, 2004; Saldana, 2013; Stake 1995). Additionally, a research assistant coded and themed the interviews, thereby increasing validity (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017). The primary researcher compared interview results with data gathered from syllabi and textbooks (Yin, 2017). To represent the data, the primary researcher used a narrative format and included tables, visuals, and quotations (Creswell & Poth,

2017; Yin, 2017). To increase validity, the primary researcher asked participants to review their interview transcripts as well as the Results section of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017).

Concerning ethical considerations, the primary researcher created a clear formal invitation for participation in the study and worked to ensure the confidentiality of both counselor educators and SCPPs. The study included several limitations including the primary researcher, scope, participant bias, and short engagement time (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

## Chapter Four

### Results

This study examined how counselor educators in various School Counselor Preparation Programs (SCPPs) trained School Counselor Trainees (SCTs) to use Motivational Interviewing (MI). In this chapter, the primary researcher presents the themes and categories that emerged from interviews with counselor educators as well as examinations of syllabi and textbooks used in courses including MI training.

The primary researcher and research assistant collaborated in the creation of themes and categories. They coded interviews independently and discussed their conclusions multiple times via in-person and phone meetings. When results conflicted, the researcher and research assistant reworked theme and category names to encompass the full meaning of their respective findings. After their initial coding, the researchers identified similar themes and categories, though the names were not identical. The researchers either agreed that one of their theme or category names more fully fit the data, or they worked together to create a new name that encompassed both of their ideas.

Through this extensive collaboration process, the researchers identified five themes: 1) state of MI training of time, 2) counselor educators' training in MI, 3) program-wide topics related to MI training, 4) MI ideas and techniques, and 5) challenges (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Themes and Categories with Representative Quotes*

Themes and Categories	Representative Quotes
State of MI Training over Time	
How MI Training Began	"...in the Addictions [Counseling] course"
How MI Training Changed	"I definitely think we're increasing."
How MI Training May Change in the Future	"...continue to integrate as much as I can"
Counselor Educators' Training in MI	
Trained through Employer	"Our college has done some trainings with faculty."
Pursued Own Training	"...on my own"
Learned by Teaching	"I learned a whole lot more about MI."
Lack of Training	"I didn't receive any MI training."
Program-Wide Topics Related to MI Training	
Essential Aspects of MI for SCTs	"...the importance of the therapeutic alliance"
Courses that Included MI Training	"...four courses total"
Effective Training Techniques	"We roleplay all the time."
Evaluating SCTs' MI Skills	"...watching their videos...and providing feedback"
MI Ideas and Techniques	
Ideas and Techniques that Received More Focus	"...the importance of reflection"
Ideas and Techniques that Received Less Focus	"They're not ready to talk about change talk..."
Ideas and Techniques that Were Easiest to Learn	"...asking open-ended questions"
Ideas and Techniques that Were Hardest to Learn	"I'd like to see them do more reflections."

## Challenges

How to Integrate MI into SCPP	“To be honest, it’s what I can fit in.”
Lack of Collaboration	“It doesn’t happen at all.”
Counselor Educator’s Training and Experience	“I’m such a novice with MI.”
SCTs’ Skill Level	“They may not have those essential skills.”

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## State of MI Training over Time

The first theme noted by the researchers was the participants’ description of MI training in their respective SCPPs over time.

### How MI Training Began

All three participants discussed what they knew about the inception of MI training within their SCPPs. Participant A was unaware of who introduced MI training at SCPP A, as she was not at the university at the time. Because she had been at the university for two years, she knew that instructors had been, to some extent, including MI within their curriculum for at least that long.

Participant B, likewise, was unsure when MI training began at SCPP B. She noted that, when she became an instructor at SCPP B, the university was in the midst of a major transition in which several veteran faculty members were leaving and new instructors were replacing them. She was unaware if the previous instructors included MI in the curriculum prior, but she had included it in her classes during her six-year term at SCPP B.



Participant C reported that another instructor introduced MI into the curriculum of the Addictions Counseling course. She was unsure of the exact year, but she estimated it to be around 2003.

### **How MI Training Changed**

Participant A stated that, prior to her arrival at the university, SCPP A offered an Advanced Addictions Counseling course, essentially an entire course devoted to MI training. SCPP A changed its course offerings due to CACREP requirements, and the course was eliminated, as there was less space in the program to offer electives.

Participant A was unsure when the change occurred. The positive outcome of the change was that MI training shifted from the sole focus of a single class to broader utilization in multiple courses.

With regard to how MI training had changed at SCPP B, Participant B stated that it was increasing as a percentage of the material covered in the program. She attributed the change to the increased depth and breadth of information relating to MI in textbooks, journal articles, and other sources.

Participant C noted that, since MI was initially introduced in Addictions Counseling, instructors had included MI training in Counseling Theories and Techniques and Child and Adolescent Counseling. As with SCPP A, instructors at SCPP C had chosen to broaden MI training beyond Addictions Counseling. Participant C had been the primary impetus for the increase. In the two years since she joined SCPP C, she had integrated MI training into Counseling Theories and Techniques, Child and Adolescent Counseling, and, informally, into Practicum and Internship.

### **How MI Training may Change in the Future**

Participant A was pleased with the integration of MI training into multiple courses and expected the trend to continue. Her question was where MI training best fit, stating, “I think my struggle with MI is it’s a way of constructing the conversation, right? It’s not really a theory; it’s not a counseling theory. Anyone can use MI, but it works really well when you talk about integrative approaches. You can integrate it into your counseling theory or whatever theories you’re coming from and use it and I think it’s very effective. I’m just not exactly sure where it fits.”

When asked about the future of MI training at SCPP B, Participant B focused on the content, mentioning that she was “always looking for new things and new information.” She noted that the research base for MI was growing and that she expected the trend to continue. She expressed a desire for future MI training at SCPP B to reflect the latest trends in research. Participant B mentioned that she would like to offer a course specific to MI, but she feared such might not be realistic given time constraints resultant of the many required courses. In summary, she stated that she “probably will continue to integrate as much [MI training in multiple courses] as I can and continue to try to stay up on the literature.”

When asked about the future of MI training at SCPP C, Participant C stated, “Oh, I have plans for that!” Specifically, Participant C would like to offer a five-day institute in which SCTs and post-graduate practitioners participate. SCTs could either pay a small fee and receive no college credit or pay tuition and receive elective credit. Participant C echoed Participant A and Participant B in noting the difficulty in adding courses due to CACREP standards but believed that a summer institute would be an option. She provided a five-day MI institute at her previous university and found it to be effective.

Aside from a summer institute, Participant C stated that it would be difficult to make significant changes to SCPP C because she only controlled the content of the courses she taught. In order to make changes beyond the courses specific to SCTs, she would have to build consensus with the clinical mental health track instructors. As she discussed these realities, Participant C recognized that adding MI training to the Consultation course would be a positive next step for the program because SCTs took the course toward the end of the program. That being the case, SCTs would be more advanced in their development as counselors and would be better prepared to absorb and integrate advanced MI skills.

### **Faculty Training in MI**

The researchers identified a second theme related to how counselor educators received training to use MI and to teach it to others.

#### **Trained through Employer**

Previous or current employers provided MI training for two of the counselor educators. Participant A explained that SCPP A was housed in the Department of Human Health Services, a division of the university which also included the nursing program. All faculty members within the department received training to use MI and to teach it to their pupils, an opportunity Participant A attributed to MI being a firmly established intervention in medical care. Participant A also noted that administrators within the department distributed information to faculty about MI workshops in the community, some of whom chose to pursue further training.

Prior to becoming a counselor educator and school counselor, Participant B practiced as a therapist in the school setting, working with elementary and middle school

students. At that time, she attended a MI workshop provided by her employer. Participant B indicated that she learned some basics about MI, but she did not consider the workshop to be a comprehensive training.

### **Pursued Own Training**

In contrast to the other participants, Participant C pursued MI training of her own accord. Prior to being a school counselor and counselor educator, Participant C served teen clients in an inner-city mental health clinic and in an in-patient psychiatric clinic. She struggled to find successful interventions and decided to try MI, at which time she completed five or six online MI courses and read Miller and Rollnick's book (2013). Participant C acknowledged that the online courses were of terrible quality, but, by using some very basic principles, she still saw results when using MI with clients. On that basis, she continued to pursue MI knowledge, attending a beginning workshop, an intermediate/advanced workshop, and a workshop during which she learned to use the Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity (MITI; Moyers, Manuel, & Ernst, 2014) to code sessions for treatment fidelity. Participant C then attended a Training New Trainers (TNT) conference provided by MINT and subsequently became trainer for future TNT conferences.

### **Learned by Teaching**

Two participants agreed that they learned more about MI as they taught it to their SCTs. Participant A acknowledged that, when she became a counselor educator, one of the courses she taught was Addictions Counseling. She stated that "to be honest, I learned a whole lot more about MI" when she taught the class, and "I don't know if I even knew what I was talking about when I [taught MI] in [Addictions Counseling] class" the first

time. Later, Participant A did a presentation at a conference with some of her SCTs and reported that the experience “has helped me have a better understanding of MI, and I’m still learning it.”

Participant B stated that she learned more about MI as she integrated new material, specifically research literature and exercises from workbooks. Her goal was to improve her MI training material for the better a bit every semester.

### **Lack of Training**

Two participants lamented their overall lack of MI training. Participant A noted that she did not receive any MI training during her graduate program in Educational Psychology with a focus on School Counseling in 1995. Likewise, she received no training during her doctoral program in Counselor Education. The first time Participant A received MI training of any kind was during a 60-minute session led by this study’s primary researcher at an ASCA conference:

See, that’s the problem. I didn’t receive any MI training. You were my MI training...I’m serious. Like, that’s the first time I really heard anything about MI was at the 2016 ASCA Conference when it was in New Orleans. It intrigued me right away, and I thought this would be really, really helpful working with high school students...So, I literally have had no formal training in MI other than your workshop, your book, and some articles that I’ve read...and what’s in the textbooks for the classes that I teach.

Similar to Participant A, Participant B did not receive formal MI training during her master or doctoral programs. Unlike Participant C, she had not pursued further training of her own accord.

### **Program-Wide Topics Related to MI Training**

The researchers noted that participants discussed a number of issues relating to MI training across the spectrum of the SCPP.

#### **Essential Aspects of MI for SCTs**

The counselor educators discussed essential aspects of MI as an overall counseling style, particularly as it related to school counseling. Participant A pointed out that MI was not a counseling theory, and, when teaching MI, she embedded it with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and the Transtheoretical Stages of Change. Above all, Participant A emphasized “the importance of the therapeutic alliance” and used MI to help SCTs learn how to effectively build relationships with students. In addition to its focus on relationships, Participant A noted the short amount of time MI required, stating “I can work while I’m walking a kid down the hall to class.”

Like Participant A, Participant B acknowledged that she viewed MI as its own set of techniques rather than a comprehensive theory. She also joined Participant A in using MI to teach SCTs to build relationships with students. Participant B stated, “I just think that [MI] skills lend themselves to having a very good relationship.” She continued, saying that MI skills could help SCTs connect with students’ parents as well as with fellow staff members. As a relationship-building tool, MI “just ties into everything.” Conversely, Participant B stated that MI techniques did not fit all scenarios, specifically those in which school counselors have to be more directive. She used the example of working with parents who either did not know how to support their student or chose not to do so. In such an instance, Participant B stated that school counselors need to be directive.

Participant C's statements aligned those of other participants in that she discussed using MI as a relationship-building tool. She specifically focused on reflections, stating, "In a relationship what actually makes a difference is reflection. So, I really spend a lot of time focusing on reflecting and empathic listening and advanced empathy – those things." Additionally, Participant C agreed that MI was not a counseling theory and was concerned that SCTs might have success in some instances and, therefore, mistakenly use MI in all scenarios.

What I don't want them learning is that MI is counseling – it's not. Counseling is a huge wide world full of lots of approaches and theories and techniques. MI is just one of those, and it's often not appropriate for some of the populations [school counselors] are seeing...I don't think we should be teaching MI like an equivalent to theories and techniques or even helping because it's a subset...So yeah, I have strong opinions about it, and I'm a huge MI person.

Her concern was largely based on the fact that SCTs did not receive the same level of clinical training as did clinical mental health counseling trainees because of CACREP and state requirements mandating that SCTs take a number of courses that prepared them to work in the school setting. In view of the resultant reduced clinical training, SCTs might be more susceptible to using only one theory or set of techniques for all contexts, even when not most appropriate. Participant C gave the example of working with students with severe mental health disorders and stated that MI would not be effective. To combat this potential problem at her previous university, Participant C taught a five-day MI institute offered after SCTs had taken multiple counseling theories

and techniques courses and were aware that there were “tons of clinical skills” and that “MI is a particular collection of clinical skills.”

### **Courses that Included MI Training**

**SCPP A.** In discussing SCPP A, Participant A mentioned five courses that included MI training: Counseling Theories, Counseling Techniques, Addictions Counseling, Practicum, and Internship. Within Counseling Theories, Participant A provided a brief introduction to MI which included multiple videos of counselors using MI. Participant A also presented the concept of evoking change talk. She stated that she embedded MI instruction within Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The primary researcher inspected the course’s syllabus and found no mention of MI, though one week was devoted to CBT. Additionally, the primary researcher reviewed the textbook for the course (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2012; see Table 6) and found that it included a four-page section about MI.<sup>4</sup> The authors based their description of MI on the previous version of Miller and Rollnick’s book (2002), which was significantly updated soon after the publication of the textbook (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The authors discussed MI within the context of person-centered theory, identifying it as a contemporary variant that was more directive. They provided a history of MI, an explanation of ambivalence, a description of several MI techniques, and a summary of research.

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<sup>4</sup> Due to resource constraints, only the primary researcher inspected syllabi and textbooks.



Table 6

*Course Textbooks and MI Content*

Course Title	Textbook Reference	MI Content
SCPP A		
Counseling Theories	Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan (2012)	Four-page MI section in person-centered chapter that included brief MI history, explanation of ambivalence, specific techniques, and MI research; based on Miller & Rollnick (2002), not most recent version (2013)
Counseling Techniques	Young (2009)	One paragraph providing a general definition of MI; no explanation of how to use MI
Addictions Counseling	Capuzzi & Stauffer (2016)	Entire chapter including a discussion of the pillars of MI, MI techniques, change versus resistance, and advantages and disadvantages
	Kelly (2016)	MI not mentioned
Practicum	ASCA (2012)	MI not mentioned
	Hodges (2016)	MI not mentioned; cited Miller & Rollnick (2002) in discussing termination of care
Internship	Shepard, Shahidulla, & Carlson (2013)	One paragraph noting general benefits of MI including growing commitment counseling and treatment for self-harm and addiction; no explanation of how to use MI
	Sklare (2014)	MI not mentioned
SCPP B		
Counseling Theories and Techniques	Hackney & Bernard (2017)	Two-page section discussing MI as an approach to help resistant clients; one-page section about using MI to address irrational thoughts; no explanation of how to use MI

Group Counseling	Corey, Corey, & Corey (2014)	Briefly discussed MI practitioners' view of resistance and ability to lessen it; no explanation of how to use MI
Career Counseling	Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey (2017)	MI not mentioned
Practicum	Hamlet (2017)	MI not mentioned
SCPP C		
Counseling Theories and Techniques	Corey (2017)	Three-page section in person-centered therapy chapter; described MI spirit and essential principles, listed basic skills, and described the intent of MI; no explanation of how to use MI techniques
Child and Adolescents Counseling	Smith-Adcock & Tucker (2017)	MI not mentioned
	Naar-King & Suarez (2011)	Entire book is about MI; assigned readings included introduction of MI, working with adolescents, Spirit of MI, person-centered skills, resistance, change talk, commitment, and integration into practice; based on previous version of MI book (Miller & Rollnick, 2002)
Addictions Counseling	Brooks & McHenry (2015)	Four-page MI section in assessment chapter; discussed using MI to help clients be honest about their substance use; discussion about Spirit of MI, techniques, and basic principles

Within the Counseling Techniques course, Participant A stated that another counselor educator extensively covered the concept of evoking change talk (Participant A did not teach the course). The primary researcher reviewed the syllabus and found that one week's topic was "Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing." Other weeks included MI-related topics such as "paraphrasing and reflecting of feelings," "reflection

of meaning and summarizing,” and “change techniques.” In addition, the primary researcher examined the textbook for the course (Young, 2009) and found that the author included one paragraph which primarily described MI as an approach used to prepare clients for a more extensive form of treatment. The author did not discuss how to implement MI and simply stated that it required special training.

Concerning the Addictions Counseling course, Participant A stated that SCTs reviewed what they learned in Counseling Theories and Counseling Techniques. The review included a significant number of demonstrations specific to helping clients with addictions. In reviewing the syllabus, the primary researcher found that one week’s topic was “Motivational Interviewing and Psychotherapeutic Approaches.” Additionally, one of the recommended readings was the previous version of Miller and Rollnick’s book (2002). The authors of the primary textbook for the course (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2016) devoted an entire chapter to MI in which they discussed the pillars of MI, commonly-used MI techniques, change versus resistance, and advantages and disadvantages of using MI. Unfortunately, the authors based the chapter on the previous version of Miller and Rollnick’s book (2002) as opposed to the newest version (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Nonetheless, with the exception of Naar-King and Suarez (2011), Capuzzi and Stauffer (2016) provided one of the fullest presentations of MI among the textbooks reviewed during this study. The primary researcher did not find any mention of MI in a secondary textbook for the course, which was not surprising given that the book focused on helping family members of those struggling with addiction (Kelly, 2016).

Regarding the Practicum and Internship courses which accompanied the fieldwork experiences, Participant A stated that she provided feedback to the SCTs who

chose to use MI in their taped sessions with students. Thus, SCTs who chose to use MI with students received feedback, whereas SCTs who did not utilize MI did not receive feedback. The primary researcher did not find any reference to MI in either syllabus. Concerning Practicum textbooks, the ASCA National Model (2012) did not mention MI or any other counseling theories or techniques. Hodges (2016) did not discuss MI and only cited Miller and Rollnick (2002) in a section regarding terminating care with clients. With regard to Internship textbooks, Shepard, Shahidullah, and Carlson (2013) allocated a paragraph to MI's potential benefit in growing students' investment in counseling, mentioned MI's effectiveness in helping students with self-harming tendencies, and described MI as a possible means of supporting students with substance abuse issues. Authors provided no information about MI ideas or techniques. A secondary textbook (Sklare, 2014) for the course provided no mention of MI.

**SCPP B.** Participant B stated that there was “a sprinkling” of MI training in multiples courses: Counseling Theories and Techniques, Group Counseling, Career Counseling, and Practicum. According to Participant B, most of SCPP B's MI training occurred within the Counseling Theories and Techniques course, which included many of MI's core ideas and fundamental techniques. Specifically, she taught the Spirit of MI, or the foundational principles of partnership, acceptance, compassion, and evocation. Additionally, Participant B used MI to teach SCTs to build relationships with students, saying, “I mean, it ties in so well with what they're learning...I'm very much humanistic in a relationship focus. Kind of life strengths-based, too. And I just think that [MI] skills lend themselves to having a very good relationship.” Concerning techniques, she stated, “we'll use that whole set of skills: open-ended questions, and so forth, and reflections.”

Participant B explained that she also taught SCTs about change talk, specifically how to identify it and respond to it. In contrast to Participant B's comprehensive description of what she covered in the course, the primary researcher found that the syllabus did not mention MI. Hackney and Bernard (2017), authors of the primary textbook, included a description of MI in a chapter regarding affective interventions. Specifically, they described MI as an approach utilizing advanced empathic skills to help clients resistant to therapy. In the two-page section, the authors mentioned MI ideas and techniques such as change talk but did not provide an in-depth explanation of how to implement MI. Hackney and Bernard also mentioned MI in a chapter about cognitive interventions, arguing that MI could be effective in helping clients address irrational thoughts, as such thoughts may be the cause of ambivalence toward change. Again, the authors did not discuss how to use MI. In addition to the primary textbook, Participant B stated that she provided the MI manual from 2012 or 2013. The primary researcher did not ask for more details about the manual during the interview, and the participant was not available for further discussion following the interview process.

Concerning the Group Counseling course, Participant B stated that the MI training largely consisted of a review of the content from Counseling Theories and Techniques along with instruction pertinent to using MI with groups. The primary researcher inspected the syllabus and found that one week's topic was "Contemporary Approaches: Solution-Focused, Narrative Therapy, Feminist Therapy, Motivational Interviewing." With such a significant amount of material to cover in one class session, the primary researcher wondered how an instructor could review all of the MI topics from the previous course along with adding new material about using MI with groups. The

syllabus also included a recommended reading about using MI in groups by Wagner and Ingersoll (2013). The authors of the course textbook (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2014) briefly discussed MI practitioners' openness to resistance as a normal phenomenon and further discussed their ability to limit it. Corey et al. (2014) did not describe the application of MI techniques.

In discussing MI training in the Career Counseling course, Participant B reported that, "what I try to do is I try to remind them about it and try to pull it into" the career counseling context. The primary researcher found no mention of MI in the syllabus. Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2017), authors of the textbook for the course, did not mention MI. However, Participant B augmented the course's primary textbook by providing a particular journal article by Klonek, Wunderlich, Spurk, and Kauffeld (2016), which directly discussed using MI in career counseling.

Lastly, concerning MI training in the Practicum course, Participant B stated, "it's more or less a review in practicum class and it's more like steering [SCTs] to think about what is more effective for them." She noted that SCTs who utilized MI in their recorded individual sessions with students received more direct feedback. The primary researcher found that the course's syllabus did not mention MI, nor did the textbook by Hamlet (2017).

**SCPP C.** Participant C reported that SCPP C included MI training in three courses: Counseling Theories and Techniques, Child and Adolescent Counseling, and Addictions Counseling. SCTs received their first MI content during the second semester of their first year, at which time they took both Counseling Theories and Techniques and

Child and Adolescent Counseling. Participant C made it clear that, during these classes, instructors focused on relationship-building skills. Specifically, Participant C stated:

So, in the beginning...we teach word skills along with all the counseling skills, the helping [skills], so they have those skills...That's where the focus is because that's where they are developmentally. They're not ready to talk about change talk because they've never even heard change talk yet. And developmentally, you know some people are more skilled than others at just listening skills – reflecting, listening.

Participant C reported that, during both courses, instructors focused on MI for one week. The primary researcher inspected the syllabus for the Counseling Theories and Techniques course and verified that the topic for one week was “Person-Centered Therapy and Motivational Interviewing.” Corey (2017), the author of the textbook for the course, devoted three pages to MI and spent the majority of that space describing the spirit and essential principles of MI. He listed basic skills and their purposes, but he did not describe how to utilize them. Regarding the Child and Adolescent Counseling course, the primary researcher found that the syllabus described the topic for one week as “MetaTheory: Motivational Interviewing.” Participant C also mentioned that SCTs were “required to read the whole Naar-King book (Naar-King & Suarez, 2011) before that class and so they'll come with a pretty good knowledge of MI.” Naar-King and Suarez (2011) was unique among the textbooks assigned for courses in this study in that the entire book was devoted to MI, specifically using MI with adolescents. The syllabus stated that SCTs were required to read pages 3-63, the portion of the book describing MI and discussing general techniques. The second half of the book, which was not assigned,

included instruction in using MI in specific scenarios such as alcohol use, drug use, risky sexual behavior, etc. The other main textbook for the course, authored by Smith-Adcock and Tucker (2017), did not mention MI.

The third time SCTs received MI training was during the Addictions Counseling course, which SCTs took during the summer of their first or second year. Participant C stated that, at that point, SCTs were more developed in their counseling skills and could move forward to more advanced MI techniques, though she was not specific about which ones. The primary researcher found that the syllabus described one week's topic as "Individual Interventions; Motivational Interviewing" and also described the week's reading as "MI Readings TBD." The suggested readings included Miller and Rollnick (2013). The primary textbook, written by Brooks and McHenry (2015), included its most significant description of MI in the Assessment chapter. The authors presented the argument that MI helped clients entering addiction treatment open up about their condition because counselors could draw out their inherent motivations. The section included a description of the Spirit of MI, the basic principles of MI, and the processes of MI (i.e., develop rapport, enhance motivation, work with resistant clients, etc.). Brooks and McHenry (2015) did not describe MI techniques or explain how counselors use MI. The primary researcher found that the information in the book would require that SCTs make a significant mental leap to render the information relevant to the school setting.

Participant C also noted that SCTs who chose to use MI during Practicum and Internship would receive feedback on their MI capabilities, but she did not consider MI to be a formal part of the curriculum. As such, Participant C, unlike Participant A, did not consider Practicum and Internship to be part of her SCPP's MI training.



## Effective Training Techniques

The researchers observed another category within program-wide considerations, specifically effective techniques counselor educators used to train SCTs (see Table 7).

Table 7

### *Training Techniques*

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Video Demonstrations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Live Demonstrations	Yes	Yes	No
Roleplaying	Yes	Yes	No
Flip the Classroom	Yes	Yes	No
Real-playing	No	No	Yes
Case Presentations	Yes	No	No
Fishbowl Demonstrations	No	Yes	No
Feedback on Taped Sessions	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Video demonstrations.** Participant A reported that one of the techniques she used was video demonstrations. She typically located the videos by searching YouTube. She chose to use video demonstrations because, as she said, “personally, I’m even hesitant to try and do a classroom demo because I’m afraid I’m going to miss it, so I’d rather show a video where someone does it right.” Participant A’s partial reliance on video demonstrations related to her perceived lack of training in MI and confidence in its use. Participant B also discussed utilizing video demonstrations in her courses. She had SCTs watch designated videos in class, and she provided a list of other videos available to SCTs to watch outside of the classroom. Likewise, Participant C stated that she used

video demonstrations, specifically videos from a series produced by the creators of MI (Miller, Rollnick, & Moyers, 1998).

**Live demonstrations.** Despite her quote above about demonstrations, Participant A stated that she did use live demonstrations with SCTs in which she exhibited how to use MI. She stated that she was more likely to utilize live demonstrations in Addictions Counseling class because SCTs had already been introduced to MI in Counseling Theories and Techniques and were ready to see a number of MI techniques used in succession. Participant C also discussed utilizing live demonstrations. Particularly when SCTs were first learning MI ideas and techniques, Participant C demonstrated how to use various strategies. As SCTs grew in knowledge base, Participant C tended to use techniques that required more SCT involvement.

**Roleplaying.** Participant A explained that she used both dyad and triad roleplaying. In dyad roleplaying, one SCT took the role of a school counselor while the other played the role of a student. Dr. Strone provided a scenario, and SCTs practiced MI techniques with their partners. With triad roleplaying, the third SCT observed the interaction, took notes, and provided feedback to the SCTs practicing MI techniques.

Participant B stated that she utilized roleplaying extensively. She reported, “God, yeah! We roleplay all the time. Yeah, we do, we roleplay all the time. I mean, that’s all our class is.” Participant B described a typical roleplaying exercise as such:

I might have them do a different scenario but then I go around and see, and I comment on certain pieces - on what they might be doing correct or not correct.

And then we come back together as a group, and... you just talk, ok so this is

what my scenario was, and this is how we did this. And you know, give each other feedback, that type of thing.

**Flipping the classroom.** Participant A stated that, when she started her career as a counselor educator, she received “terrible evaluations” because she relied heavily on lecture and slideshow presentations. In response, Participant A chose to flip her classroom and had SCTs listen to a recorded version of her slideshow presentation prior to class. She then utilized the extra class time to have SCTs practice skills. As stated by Participant A:

I mean, we’re in there for three hours, right? Maybe I’ll do a group activity, and then we’ll do a discussion, and we will process what we did as a group in our groups. Then I’ll switch to a video. I’ll have them watch, and then we’ll talk about the video.

Participant B also discussed flipping the classroom. In her classes, SCTs studied the assigned reading ahead of time and completed a journal reflection. In addition, SCTs recorded questions they had about the week’s topic. During class time, Participant B provided a short review of the reading, after which SCTs shared their questions, practiced techniques, and provided feedback to each other.

**Real-playing.** Participant C was the only counselor educator to describe using real-play training techniques. In real-play, one SCT was a counselor while the other discussed a real issue in his/her life (in contrast to roleplaying, wherein he/she acts out the role of a student). Participant C described real-playing in this way:

We do demos a ton, a lot of demonstrations in the beginning. So, what I mean by that is they’re real playing. So, a master’s student will volunteer to use themselves

and bring a real issue and I'm doing a demo of MI. So, lots of demo, lots of real-play, and we do timeouts all the time. You know, let's talk about what just happened and process that.

**Case presentations.** Participant A explained that she used case presentations as a training technique. She said she was more likely to use this technique in Addictions Counseling class and described it as follows:

I have a case presentation, and I split them up into groups and have them talk about what they think the problem is, and how they would handle the client, and what assessments would they use and how they think the client should be treated. Is there any dual diagnosis going on? You know, what are some family issues? So, I let them work in groups and come up with kind of a case presentation, or I might - I spend a lot of class time doing discussions.

**Fishbowl demonstrations.** Participant B was the only counselor educator who utilized this training approach. She invited practicing school counselors to conduct live demonstrations using scenarios provided by the SCTs. While the school counselors were demonstrating various techniques, SCTs watched and took notes. After a given demonstration, SCTs asked school counselors why they used various statements, questions, techniques, etc.

**Video feedback.** All three counselor educators reported that they provided video feedback. For Participant A and Participant C, SCTs only received feedback when they chose to use MI while working with students at their practicum or internship sites.<sup>5</sup>

Within Counseling Theories and Techniques, Participant B had SCTs record two sessions

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<sup>5</sup> This technique is listed last because two of the counselor educators only used video feedback with SCTs who chose to practice MI in recorded Practicum or Internship sessions.

in which they either talked about themselves (i.e., real-play) or created scenarios and roleplayed with classmates. During these sessions, SCTs focused on MI-consistent relationship-building techniques such as reflecting, empathic listening, open-ended questions, and summaries. SCTs presented taped sessions to their fellow SCTs who, upon viewing the sessions, completed confidential feedback forms. During Practicum, SCTs created one tape which they transcribed and labeled with the techniques they used. Again, they showed their tapes to classmates and received confidential feedback via the same evaluation forms. Additionally, Participant B provided feedback on the specific techniques they attempted to use.

### **Evaluating SCTs' MI Skills**

Each counselor educator discussed how they evaluated SCTs' ability to employ MI ideas and techniques with fidelity. Participant A discussed two main ways SCTs received feedback: observation from instructors during in-class practice and evaluation of taped sessions. Participant A was clear about the necessity of SCTs practicing skills and receiving others' input:

...any type of practical experience. Just talking about it isn't getting it across, really. I mean, it will expose them to the ideas of it but, it's not until they actually practice it and get feedback on what they're doing that it starts to sink in.

Participant A believed that SCTs greatly benefited from receiving feedback concerning their MI skills at multiple points during their training at SCPP A (i.e., during several courses across multiple years). The culmination of that feedback occurred during Practicum and Internship for those SCTs who attempted to use MI during taped sessions and who, therefore, received feedback.

Participant B echoed Participant A in that she described SCTs receiving feedback during in-class practice and taped sessions. She acknowledged that SCTs needed as much feedback as possible, but that it was difficult for counselor educators to give adequate input due to large class sizes. To combat this, Participant B encouraged SCTs to share critiques with each other during in-class practice. She typically utilized a three-step process of feedback in which she contributed her thoughts as SCTs practiced, then invited SCTs to share their opinions with each other, and finally led a class-wide discussion about common points of feedback. Concerning input on taped sessions, Participant B stated that she typically coded SCTs' use of active listening skills, positive body language, reflections, clarifications, and summaries.

Regarding the evaluation of SCT's MI skill, Participant C acknowledged, "I'm not so good at that." Participant C's assessment was not likely due to an inability to provide evaluations, but due to the lack of clear places within SCPP C to include comprehensive evaluations. When Participant C taught a five-day MI institute at a previous university, at the beginning and end of the course, she required SCTs to submit 20-minute sessions which she coded for MI fidelity using the MITI (Moyers, Manuel, & Ernst, 2014). In so doing, Participant C gave SCTs the opportunity to see both their areas of growth during the course of the institute and what skills they needed to hone. At SCPP C, Participant C stated that she provided feedback regarding MI skills on SCTs' practicum and internship tapes (for those who chose to utilize MI). Additionally, during Child and Adolescent Counseling, Participant C used sentence stems to assess SCTs' understanding of MI. For example, Participant C provided fictitious students' statements

and asked SCTs how they would respond. Participant C then provided input on the MI fidelity of SCTs' proposed responses.

### **MI Ideas and Techniques**

The researchers recognized a fourth theme in which counselor educators discussed particular MI ideas and techniques (see Table 1 for definitions of techniques).

#### **Ideas and Techniques that Received More Focus**

With the limited time available in their SCPPs, counselor educators understandably had to choose which MI ideas and techniques received more focus than others. As previously mentioned, Participant A spoke at length about the importance of using MI to build relationships with students. To that end, she reported that she heavily focused on techniques that strengthened the therapeutic alliance such as open-ended questions and “the importance of reflection, not just simple reflections but the complex reflections” (see Table 8). Participant A also stated that she was “nerdy and liked nerdy techniques.” She specifically described MI activities such as ruler questions, two roads, and values discrepancies, all of which are used by MI practitioners to increase change talk. When asked to cite the most essential MI technique for SCTs, Participant A said, “listening for change talk,” and she also acknowledged that it was the hardest thing for her to do.

Table 8

*MI Techniques that Received More or Less Focus*

More Focus	Less Focus <sup>d</sup>
Reflecting <sup>a, b, c</sup>	Change Talk <sup>c</sup>
Open-Ended Questions <sup>a, b, c</sup>	Sustain Talk <sup>c</sup>
Change Talk <sup>a, b</sup>	Planning <sup>c</sup>
MI Activities <sup>a</sup>	
Spirit of MI <sup>b</sup>	
Systemic Change <sup>b</sup>	
Asking Permission <sup>c</sup>	

<sup>a</sup>Participant A. <sup>b</sup>Participant B. <sup>c</sup>Participant C. <sup>d</sup>Participant A reported that she was not sure what she focused on less while Participant B said she covered all the essentials.

When asked what MI techniques she emphasized, Participant B first said “I feel like I don’t have a lot of time” to cover all she wished she could, though she later stated that she covered all of the essentials. Her responses paralleled Participant A’s in that she also cited the importance of relationship-building skills such as open-ended questions and reflections. Participant B also specified that she spent a significant amount of class time on evoking change talk, noting that SCTs must learn to appreciate that “every individual has their own reason for change.” Participant B’s comments were unique in that she discussed using MI in a systemic way. Several times, she discussed the importance of working with as many people influential in students’ lives as possible. She asked SCTs to consider how they could use MI as they work with parents, teachers, mental health counselors, and others who want the best for students. When asked what she viewed as the most essential MI technique for SCTs, Participant B cited the Spirit of MI. This



answer reflected one of five times she discussed it during the interview. Participant B described a SCT who embodied the Spirit of MI:

You know, somebody that has those qualities and knows how to be a really good listener and knows how to focus on you and change and your reasons for change and why you would want to do it and kind of seek that out. Like there's so much fear, there's so much fear in change and some people might think that we never change, but we are constantly changing and evolving, and I think the aspect that's missing in this culture that we have, we kind of want it to come too fast. It is a process.

Participant C echoed the other two counselor educators in stating that she focused on relationship-building skills such as reflections and open-ended questions. She noted that, because SCTs were not seasoned therapists, it made sense to spend the preponderance of class time on basic skills as opposed to more advanced skills like evoking change talk. Interestingly, Participant C, the most experienced MI trainer, chose to cover the least amount of material and instead concentrate on “advanced empathy skills.” Participant C also reported that she focused on permission asking, something that only she brought up. She stated that,

In their master's program of the first year, they're getting a lot of permission asking. You know, before they provide information or make a suggestion or offer advice or any of that, I really drill that one home because they just want to start advising. So, they get a lot of permission asking...If I can just get them to ask permission before they start doing their thing, that changes everything.

When asked about the most essential MI technique for SCTs, Participant C again concentrated on empathic skills: “When I’m training clinicians, you know, during their first year, it’s really like empathic listening, advanced empathy. So, reflections and mainly complex reflections.”

### **Ideas and Techniques that Received Less Focus**

When counselor educators determined what aspects of MI to emphasize, they also inherently decided what parts of MI to minimize, regardless of whether they did so intentionally. When asked on which aspects she focused less, Participant A stated that she was unsure. She acknowledged that she had not read Miller and Rollnick’s book (2013) and had never been trained in the breadth of MI. She reported that she based her MI training on the primary researcher’s book (North, 2017), stating, “I cover pretty much everything that’s in your book, so if you left anything out, then, yeah, I’m leaving that out.”<sup>6</sup> Participant A made it clear that her MI training was meant to introduce SCTs to MI as opposed to make them experts. She noted,

I think that, if what I share in my classes on MI is intriguing, SCTs can go and get further training on it outside of [SCPP A]. I don’t have to do a comprehensive workshop. I just need to expose them to it because there are so many training opportunities.

Participant B stated that she more or less covered all of the MI essentials, though she wished there was more time to help SCTs practice and feel completely comfortable using MI. She did not define what she meant by the MI essentials, but her interview in its entirety suggested that her view of MI essentials encompassed empathy techniques as

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<sup>6</sup> North (2017) does not include all MI ideas and techniques in Miller and Rollnick (2013), as the book is intended to be a shorter summary of MI for practicing school counselors.

well as evoking change talk. Participant B noted the importance of SCTs realizing that MI was not appropriate for all circumstances and that some instances required more directive techniques. That being the case, Participant B did not attempt to train SCTs in all aspects of MI because she felt they also needed to be proficient in skills that were appropriate when MI was not.

Participant C was the most intentional in deciding on which MI ideas and techniques to focus and which to minimize. She stated that she purposefully trained SCTs to utilize advanced empathy techniques to build relationships but spent little time teaching them to evoke change talk or create calculated plans for change (see Table 7). She believed that most SCTs were not sufficiently developed in their counseling skills to fully absorb all aspects of MI, so she taught them the basic, relationship-building skills. In the past, when she trained post-graduate clinicians and SCTs during a five-day MI institute, she focused more on change talk, sustain talk, planning, and specific MI activities. She did so in view of the fact that SCTs took the course near the end of their SCPP. In SCPP C, Participant C and her colleagues waited to introduce more advanced MI skills such as evoking change talk, limiting sustain talk, and making plans for change until SCTs had further developed their skills (i.e., in Child and Adolescent Counseling and Addictions Counseling during their second or third years).

### **Ideas and Techniques that Were Easiest to Learn**

Counselor educators discussed what MI ideas or techniques were easiest to learn for SCTs. Participant A reported that SCTs at SCPP A mastered open-ended questions most readily, as they were a particular area of focus in their Counseling Theories and Techniques Course (see Table 9). Additionally, Participant A noted that SCTs had little

trouble using simple reflections once they were given the opportunity to practice for a short amount of time. It is important to note, however, that Participant A also suggested that SCTs' ability to use reflections deteriorated over time (see Ideas and Techniques that Were Hardest to Learn section).

Table 9

*MI Techniques that Were Easiest and Hardest to Learn*

Easiest to Learn	Hardest to Learn
Open-Ended Questions <sup>a</sup>	Open-Ended Questions <sup>b, c</sup>
Reflections <sup>a</sup>	Reflections <sup>a, b</sup>
Spirit of MI <sup>b</sup>	Change Talk <sup>a</sup>
Summaries <sup>c</sup>	Autonomy <sup>c</sup>
Affirmations <sup>c</sup>	

<sup>a</sup>Participant A. <sup>b</sup>Participant B. <sup>c</sup>Participant C.

Participant B stated that SCTs at SCPP B found the Spirit of MI to be the easiest to learn. Participant B believed that to be the case because the tenets of the MI spirit – partnership, acceptance, compassion, and evocation – came naturally to people who chose to join a helping profession. She also believed that SCTs experienced the Spirit of MI while working with practicing school counselors during Practicum and Internship courses. Ideally, school counselors under whom SCTs learned used the Spirit of MI themselves toward both their students and the SCTs. Participant B reported that one SCT came to understand the Spirit of MI when the school counselor overseeing her accepted her unconditionally despite her many mistakes.

Participant C stated that SCTs at SCPP C most easily learned summaries and affirmations. Concerning summaries, Participant C believed that SCTs grasped this concrete skill relatively easily because, as less experienced practitioners, they thought

about the counseling process in a concrete way. Concerning affirmations, Participant C noted that most SCTs were excited to point out students' strengths and constructive behaviors. If anything, SCTs tended to take their comments too far and cheer-lead as opposed to affirm. Once Participant C explained the difference between the two, SCTs quickly course-corrected.

### **Ideas and Techniques that Were Hardest to Learn**

Counselor educators also discussed MI ideas and techniques that were the most difficult for SCTs to master. Participant A noted that ideas and techniques with which SCTs struggled changed during the course of their MI training. She stated that SCTs readily employed simple reflections at the beginning of their training, but, by the time they were working with students in Practicum and Internship, they “go into question mode.” Participant A stated,

I'd like to see them do more reflections, and when they do more reflections they're always amazed at how well it works and how much deeper they can get the client to go. How it leads to more conversation. How just a simple reflection can lead to more conversation, or complex reflection, but how reflection can help the client talk more. I don't think they always think that's going to happen. I think they sort of naturally gravitate to wanting to ask questions.

Additionally, Participant A reported that SCTs had difficulty evoking change talk even though adolescents tended to provide more of it than did adult clients. About change talk, Participant A stated,

Like recognizing it and focusing on it because the whole piece about ambivalence and the whole idea that we are ambivalent, that's such a no-brainer, especially

when dealing with an adolescent. Adolescents are probably even more ambivalent than just the general person. Just because of their development and where they are in their development, but listening for the change talk, identifying that part of their ambivalence that wants to change, and then focusing in on that and helping them emphasize that.

Participant A also noted that, when SCTs attempted to evoke change talk, some unintentionally elicited sustain talk instead.

Participant B stated that some SCTs, especially those coming into SCPP B without a psychology background, struggled with basic skills such as reflecting and asking open-ended questions and, therefore, had difficulty moving to more complex skills. Participant B reported,

Probably the challenges that I have are that the [SCTs] are not necessarily at that skill level. In other words, what I mean is they may not- they may not be a student who is essentially a good listener, doesn't have quite the questioning techniques... they do have trouble thinking about more open-ended questions and, you know, how would you do that and how would you phrase that.

Participant C joined Participant A and Participant B in explaining that, especially for SCTs with no previous experience in the counseling profession, mastering basic skills like reflecting and asking open-ended questions was the most difficult. These SCTs were more likely to string together multiple questions instead of reflecting. It is important to note that, although the counselor educators agreed on this point, their response to the problem differed. Participant A and Participant B chose to train SCTs to use more complex skills like evoking change talk and limiting sustain talk despite SCTs' difficulty

with basic techniques. Participant C, on the other hand, chose to focus on relationship-building techniques and limited her teaching time with regard to more complex skills. Participant C went on to say that the hardest MI idea for experienced teachers moving into school counseling was reinforcing autonomy. They were concerned that, if they reinforced autonomy, students could leave their office and make bad decisions without receiving direction from them. As Participant C reported, “So just convincing them and asking them to step outside the hierarchical system of the school and to reinforce somebody's innate existential right to make terrible decisions, it is antithetical to the school setting.” Alternatively, SCTs who had never worked in the school setting did not fear the hierarchical structure and more readily acknowledged students’ power of personal choice.

### **Challenges**

Though the counselor educators involved in this study were optimistic about teaching SCTs to use MI, they also discussed a number of challenges that made MI training difficult.

#### **How to Integrate MI into SCPPs**

Participant B and Participant C explained the difficulty in determining how counselor educators should integrate MI into their SCPPs’ curriculum. Specifically, both discussed the impact of time constraints. Participant B stated that she struggled to decide what MI content to include and what to set aside, saying, “To be honest, it’s what I can fit in...Timing is an issue that gets in the way for anything because you only have so many hours.” She specifically lamented the constrained amount of time available to train SCTs to use MI when working with other adults like teachers, administrators, parents, and other

stakeholders in students' lives. Participant B explained that the problem of MI integration was related to class size, in that SCTs would likely master MI more readily were there fewer trainees per class. With smaller classes, Participant B would have more opportunities to provide individual coaching.

Participant C agreed that it was difficult to include as much MI training as she would like and said that it was a common problem with newer techniques; in order to add new material, counselor educators must choose aspects of their curriculum to set aside. She also noted that CACREP and state laws required SCTs to take several classes preparing them to work in the school setting. Consequently, they received less depth in their clinical training, including MI instruction. As previously mentioned, though Participant C was a firm proponent of MI, she also had strong opinions about SCTs using MI only when appropriate. She believed that SCTs must learn a breadth of clinical skills, of which MI was "just a subset." She noted the challenge of integrating MI ideas and techniques in SCTs' development at a point when they possessed the skills to understand and use them properly. Participant C believed that SCTs should learn the relationship-building skills such as reflections, open-ended questions, and other empathy techniques early in their training. She felt SCTs should be exposed to more complex skills such as evoking change talk and limiting sustain talk once they had more experience. Participant C integrated more advanced MI skills in courses taken later in the progression of SCPP C, specifically Child and Adolescent Counseling and Addictions Counseling. As previously mentioned, she hoped to add a five-day MI institute for SCTs who seek to enhance their training.

### **Lack of Collaboration**



All three counselor educators shared concern about a lack of collaboration in their respective SCPPs among instructors who provided MI training. In general, instructors had some idea of what aspects of MI others covered. However, they failed to collaborate in an effort to ensure that they did not repeat certain material or unintentionally fail to present other material. Regarding collaboration, Participant A stated, “That doesn’t happen at all. It’s very piecemeal. [SCTs] get exposed to [MI] in a variety of courses, but there’s not any kind of cohesive collaboration on that.” Participant B echoed the sentiment, saying, “I know that [another SCPP B faculty member] has similar feelings about more contemporary techniques and Motivational Interviewing. So, I’m positive that [she talks] about it. In what depth, I have no clue.” Participant C, likewise, reported that another SCPP C instructor included MI material in his/her courses, but she did not collaborate with the instructor concerning MI content.

### **Counselor Educator’s Training and Experience**

Participant A was the only counselor educator who spoke extensively about her lack of training and experience. The researchers chose to include it in the results because of the compelling nature of the data. When asked to identify the biggest challenge she faced in providing MI training, she said, “For me personally? Lack of experience. Feeling like I – having the imposter syndrome.” Elsewhere in the interview, Participant A stated, “I’m going to say, I’m such a novice with MI...Personally, I’m even hesitant to try and do a classroom demo because I’m afraid I’m going to miss it, so I’d rather show a video where someone does it right.” In other words, Participant A’s perceived skill level affected what training techniques she used with SCTs. It is important to note that Participant A’s perceived ability was subjective; she may have been quite good at using

MI and training others to do so. However, her level of training and experience were not subjective. Participant A felt, to some degree, ill-equipped to provide MI training.

Regardless, Participant A was optimistic about her growth as an instructor:

This is something that I tell my [SCTs] sometimes - but it is something that I read and have had to embrace myself - is 'don't compare your chapter one to someone else's chapter twenty.' I use that particularly with my [SCTs] that are in Practicum, and they feel like, 'Oh my god, they're the worst counselors ever. They don't know what they're doing.' That's kind of how I feel as a new professor sometimes, but, like I said, I'm definitely growing a lot - and fast.

### **SCTs' Skill Level**

Both Participant B and Participant C noted the challenge of training SCTs to utilize MI who were still in the early stages of their journey as counselors. They were both concerned that implementing MI with full fidelity was difficult for new counselors. When discussing SCTs' learning to use all aspects of MI, Participant B plainly stated that they "are not necessarily at that skill level." Later, she said, "they may not have those essential skills" of reflecting and open-ended questions, which was "a little bit of a challenge." Participant C went further, stating that, though she was "a huge MI person," she did not want SCTs "to think that MI is counseling." Her concern was that SCTs, because of their relative lack of training and experience, were more susceptible to the mistake of using only one theory or set of techniques for all contexts. Stated another way, SCTs might use MI even when not appropriate for a particular scenario or not succeeding a specific student. Participant C believed that clinical mental health trainees might receive enough clinical training to implement MI with proper fidelity, but she was

dubious that SCTs could receive enough clinical instruction due to the number of school-specific courses they were required to complete. As a result of her concern, Participant C chose to primarily focus on relationship-building skills and reserve more complex skills for courses scheduled during the latter portions of the program.

### **Summary of Results**

In this chapter, the primary researcher presented themes and categories which emerged from interviews and documents as well as data supporting these findings. The first theme, state of MI training over time, included three categories: how MI training began, how MI training changed, and how MI training may change in the future. The researchers identified a second theme, counselor educators' training in MI, with four categories including trained through employer, pursued own training, learned by teaching, and lack of training. Four categories comprised a third theme, program-wide topics related to MI training, including essential aspects of MI for SCTs, courses that included MI training, effective training techniques, and evaluating SCTs' MI skills. The researchers identified a fourth theme, MI ideas and techniques, composed of four categories: ideas and techniques that received more focus, ideas and techniques that received less focus, ideas and techniques that were easiest to learn, and ideas and techniques that were hardest to learn. Finally, the researchers identified a fifth theme, challenges, with four categories including how to integrate MI into SCPP, lack of collaboration, counselor educator's training and experience, and SCTs' skill level.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine how counselor educators in School Counselor Preparation Programs (SCPPs) train School Counselor Trainees (SCTs) to utilize Motivational Interviewing (MI). To explore the topic, the primary researcher employed a qualitative, multiple case study design to gather complex data in several highly contextualized settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2017). The primary researcher investigated three SCPPs by interviewing counselor educators, examining syllabi, and reviewing textbooks. Counselor educators volunteered to participate in the study after receiving an email invitation through the CESNET listserv. The study's convenience sample included Participant A from SCPP A, Participant B from SCPP B, and Participant C from SCPP C. This chapter includes a summary of the study's findings, implications of those findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

The main research question for this project was: How do counselor educators in SCPPs train SCTs to use MI? The primary researcher sought data that might assist SCPP stakeholders who examine their programs' MI training. To answer the overarching research question, the primary researcher addressed the below research sub-questions.

#### **What is the format of MI training at various SCPPs?**

The primary researcher and research assistant found that none of the SCPPs had a program-wide strategy to provide comprehensive MI training, nor did the counselor educators collaborate with other instructors in their respective SCPPs to determine what

MI content they covered or what training techniques they used. SCPP A included content about MI in five classes, while SCPP B included it in four classes, and SCPP C included it in three classes. Counselor educators from all three programs focused on the relationship-building aspects of MI. During introductory courses, Participant A and Participant B trained SCTs to evoke change talk, while Participant C, chose to reserve more complex skills for later courses.

**How did SCPPs' MI training come to be, how has it evolved over time, and how do counselor educators expect it to change in the future?**

Participant A and Participant B were unsure about the origin of MI training at their SCPPs, while Participant C believed that another counselor educator introduced MI into SCPP C's Addictions Counseling course in approximately 2003. All three counselor educators noted that the amount of MI training included in their respective SCPPs had increased over time. All three counselor educators expected that, in the future, MI training would grow in both the number of classes and the amount of time devoted to it.

**On what MI ideas or techniques do counselor educators focus more or less?**

All counselor educators reported that, due to time constraints, they were unable to provide SCTs with as much MI training as they would prefer. All three counselor educators focused on the relationship-building skills of reflecting and open-ended questions. Participant A and Participant B mentioned that they also concentrated on evoking change talk. Participant A was the sole counselor educator who noted spending time on specific MI activities such as two roads, ruler questions, and values discrepancies, while Participant B alone focused on the Spirit of MI and systemic change. In contrast, Participant C spotlighted the skill of asking permission. Concerning MI ideas

and techniques receiving less focus, neither Participant A nor Participant B gave an indication that they strategically limited training within certain topics. Conversely, Participant C intentionally limited focus on more complex skills such as evoking change talk and creating plans until late in the progression of SCPP C courses.

**Which MI ideas or techniques are the easiest or hardest for SCTs to become competent using?**

Participant A reported that relationship-building skills like open-ended questions and reflections were the simplest to grasp, though she also stated that SCTs had a tendency to not reflect enough by the time they took Practicum and Internship courses. She also stated that evoking change talk was difficult for her SCTs. Participant B noted that SCTs easily comprehended the Spirit of MI stated that open-ended questions and reflections were difficult for SCTs, especially those who did not have a background in counseling. Participant C stated that her SCTs readily became proficient with summaries and affirmations, and she agreed with the other counselor educators in noting that SCTs struggled with basic empathy skills like reflections and open-ended questions. Additionally, she stated that SCTs with previous experience in teaching struggled to reinforce students' autonomy.

**Which training techniques do counselor educators find most effective?**

All three counselor educators mentioned that they used video demonstrations. Participant A and Participant B also reported using live demonstrations, flipping the classroom, and roleplaying. Instead of roleplaying, Participant C utilized real-playing, during which one SCT spoke about his/her own life while the other practiced MI skills. Participant A also employed case presentations, while Participant B mentioned fishbowl

presentations. Finally, all three counselor educators provided feedback on SCTs' taped sessions, although Participant A and Participant C did so only when SCTs chose to use MI techniques in sessions. Participant B, on the other hand, provided feedback on relationship-building skills for all videos but did not mention evaluating other MI techniques.

### **How do counselor educators evaluate SCTs' ability to use MI?**

Concerning ways they evaluated SCTs' MI ability, Participant A and Participant B both reported that they circulated throughout their classrooms and gave verbal recommendations as SCTs roleplayed together. Additionally, all three counselor educators noted that they assessed MI ability on SCTs' taped sessions. Participant C was alone in her use of sentence stems to assess SCTs. Regarding feedback in general, Participant C lamented that there were not enough opportunities to provide actionable evaluations in SCPP C.

### **How do counselor educators prepare themselves to train SCTs to use MI?**

Counselor educators' experience differed regarding their own MI training. Participant A described participating in a workshop offered to all faculty members at her university, attending a 60-minute presentation, and learning by teaching MI content to SCTs. Overall, however, she stated that she had "no formal training" and that she did not feel confident in her ability to demonstrate MI skills with fidelity. Participant B reported that she was trained in MI while a therapist. She agreed with Participant A in that she continued to enhance her knowledge base as she trained SCTs to use MI. Participant C received formal MI training via online courses, reading, workshops, and coaching. Her

preparation included the highest level of MI training, which was presented by MINT at a conference for MI trainers.

### **What challenges do counselor educators face in training SCTs to use MI?**

Counselor educators voiced their concern about a number of obstacles in training SCTs to use MI. First, Participant B and Participant C discussed the difficulty of integrating the full breadth of MI into SCPP curriculum, particularly in view of time constraints resultant from CACREP and state requirements. Secondly, all three counselor educators reported a lack of collaboration among instructors at their respective SCPPs. Thirdly, Participant A specifically noted that she may not have had sufficient MI training and experience to fully equip SCTs. Lastly, Participant B and Participant C shared their concern relative to SCTs' ability to grasp all aspects of MI, especially in the early stages of their development as counselors.

### **Implications of Findings**

In reviewing the results of the study, the researchers noted a number of implications which may prove beneficial as SCPP stakeholders evaluate the MI training they provide their SCTs.

### **Need for Program-Wide Strategy for MI Training**

None of the SCPPs the researchers examined had a comprehensive MI training strategy, and the instructors in the respective programs did not collaborate to ensure that MI was adequately presented. Stakeholders at SCPPs may find it useful to consider creating a progression during which SCTs learn various aspects of MI as they progress through their program of study. In so doing, stakeholders might take into account SCTs' skill level at various points in their training, as discussed by Participant B and Participant



C. SCPP stakeholders might also consider how to integrate MI into their clinical training. All counselor educators involved in this study noted that MI was not a counseling theory. Participant A included MI with CBT, while Participant B and Participant C combined MI with person-centered therapy. Additionally, stakeholders might consider creating a strategy for SCTs to receive regular feedback. Research suggests that the MI ability of trainees who only attended workshops eroded over time, whereas the skill of those who also received feedback and/or coaching did not decline (Baer et al., 2004; Miller et al. 2004; Schwalbe et al., 2014). The counselor educators involved in this study provided feedback on taped sessions only if SCTs utilized MI in them. Counselor educators might consider having all SCTs practice MI skills during sessions and follow up the sessions with individual coaching.

### **Shift to Broader Utilization of MI**

Participant A and Participant C reported that MI had previously been the focus of one Addictions Counseling class, but counselor educators added MI training to a number of other courses over time. This shift from viewing MI as an addiction treatment to a generic behavior-change treatment paralleled the history of MI as it spread into many helping fields including medical care, mental health counseling, social work, and education (Armstrong et al., 2011; Atkinson & Ames, 2007; Atkinson & Woods, 2003; Barnett, Sussman, Smith, Rohrbach, & Spruijt-Metz, 2012; Brody, 2009; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Gowers et al., 2007; Kamen, 2009; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Musser et al., 2008; Nock & Kazdin, 2005; Snape & Atkinson 2015; Snape & Atkinson, 2017; West et al., 2007). As Participant A stated, “integrating MI into our courses so that [SCTs are] getting exposed to it in a variety of different courses is good.” SCPP stakeholders might

consider incorporating MI training into all courses relating to behavioral change rather than limiting MI training solely to Addiction Counseling.

### **Clarity about Essential Aspects of MI for SCTs**

The counselor educators who took part in this study discussed MI in two distinct parts: relationship-building skills (i.e., open-ended questions, reflections, summaries, affirmations, etc.) and behavior-change skills (i.e., evoking change talk, limiting sustain talk, making plans for change, etc.). To varying degrees, all three counselor educators discussed their decision-making process regarding how much to focus on these two aspects of MI and in which courses to include them. In reality, though, according to MI's creators, MI does not have two parts, but four (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Miller and Rollnick (2013) described four processes of MI: engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning. Engaging is essentially a way to display advanced empathy to clients and form a therapeutic alliance (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). It incorporates the relationship-building skills discussed at length by the counselor educators. Focusing is the process of narrowing the client's focus to a particular behavior to change and directing conversations to that end (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Only Participant C mentioned focusing, stating that MI training at SCPP C was "mainly engaging and focusing." Evoking is the process of eliciting change talk from clients while also limiting sustain talk (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Miller and Rollnick (2013) emphasized this process, stating that, "It has always been at the heart of MI" (p. 28). All three counselor educators conversed about this process. Participant A and Participant B stated that they introduced it early in the progression through their programs, while Participant C intentionally delayed introducing the topic until the later stages of SCTs' training. With regard to

limiting sustain talk, Participant C alone mentioned the idea and only spoke of it in the context of providing feedback to SCTs who used MI in their Practicum or Internship taped sessions. The researchers found the lack of focus on limiting sustain talk concerning because Miller and Rollnick (2013) considered it to be a vital aspect of the process of evoking. Planning, the last MI process, refers to helping clients create specific action items to follow once they are properly motivated to make a behavioral change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Only Participant C discussed this process, noting that she mentioned it to SCTs in passing.

The researchers found that the counselor educators struggled to include all MI processes in their training. They mentioned various challenges including time constraints and SCTs' ability levels. Counselor educators seemed to respond to these challenges by focusing on relationship-building skills (i.e., engaging) and, to a lesser extent, evoking change talk while reducing or eliminating other aspects of MI such as focusing, limiting sustain talk, and planning. Given these results, the researchers wondered at what point the reduction or exclusion of MI characteristics turns the approach into something other than a behavioral change treatment. Participant A addressed this by stating that her goal was simply to introduce MI to SCTs and to let them pursue further training of their own accord were they interested. Similarly, Participant C hoped to provide a five-day institute for SCTs who wanted to learn more about MI.

Ultimately, SCPP stakeholders might consider what they believe to be the essential aspects of MI which make it an effective behavioral change treatment. They must then decide whether they believe it necessary for SCTs to become proficient in MI and, if so, consciously build those core aspects of MI into their programs. SCPP

stakeholders might be wary of unintentionally debilitating MI as a behavioral change treatment and turning it solely into a means of building relationships.

### **Increased MI Training for Counselor Educators**

Participant C was the most extensively trained counselor educator in the study, as she pursued instruction and coaching on her own accord. Both Participant A and Participant B, on the other hand, stated they felt under-trained. Participant A, in particular, noted that she was “a novice with MI” and that she was concerned about leading live demonstrations because she was not confident in her own MI abilities. Interestingly, Participant A perceived her competency in this way although her university provided a MI workshop for instructors in her department. If SCPP stakeholders desire SCTs to be well-trained in their programs, they must ensure that their instructors have received high-quality instruction and coaching. Due to MI’s relatively recent expansion into a number of helping disciplines, it is likely that many counselor educators have not been sufficiently trained in MI. Consequently, SCPP stakeholders could consider providing MI training which includes coaching to their counselor educators (Baer et al., 2004; Miller et al. 2004; Schwalbe et al., 2014).

### **Limitations**

#### **Primary Researcher**

The primary researcher was a potential limitation of the study. As discussed in The Role of the Primary Researcher section, the researcher had trained SCTs and practicing school counselors to use MI. His identity may have impacted the data provided by the participants. For example, participants may have felt pressure to exaggerate the amount of MI training that occurred in their SCPP. Additionally, although the primary

researcher was committed to bracketing his connections to the topic, his interpretation of the data may have been impacted by his association with the school counseling profession, his belief in the effectiveness of MI, and his experience in training educators to use MI. Bracketing was the researcher's goal, but he may not have fully attained it.

### **Scope**

Another limitation of this study was its scope. Due to resource constraints, the primary researcher was able to interview only one counselor educator per SCPP. A broader study might gather perception data from other instructors who teach courses that include MI. Additionally, a study with greater scope could interview current SCTs as well as graduates of the SCPPs to gather their impressions of the MI training received.

### **Sampling Bias**

A third limitation was sampling bias. The primary researcher recruited counselor educators using the CESNET listserv (see Sampling Procedures section of Chapter Three). As a result, participants were limited to counselor educators who were members of the listserv. Additionally, it is possible that the wording of the invitation email limited the scope of counselor educators who responded to those whose SCPPs already included a robust version of MI training (see Appendix B for invitation email).

### **Participant Bias**

A fourth limitation was participant bias. One could argue that, as proud faculty members of their SCPPs, interviewees may have provided overly-positive data. Additionally, they may have contributed biased data because they feared potential repercussions if they provided unflattering data. The primary researcher tried to abate this potential concern by repeatedly assuring participants of confidentiality.

### **Short Engagement Time**

A final limitation of the study was the short engagement time. Creswell and Poth (2017) argued that, though short engagement times are common, prolonged engagement with cases can increase the validity of results. Due to resource constraints, the primary researcher was able to interview participants only one time. The interviews and documents reflected a particular moment in time for each SCPP. It is possible that SCPPs' MI training changed after the researcher gathered data or that it will change in the future. The scope of this study limited the relevance of the results to the time during which the researcher gathered data.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

#### **Descriptive Research Studying SCPPs and MI Training**

Researchers should consider conducting descriptive studies tracking information across many SCPPs relative to MI training. Such studies would give a more generalizable picture of the state of MI training across SCPPs. Descriptive studies could poll counselor educators to gain a sense of the number of SCPPs training SCTs to use MI, in which courses SCPPs include MI, on which MI techniques counselor educators focus, what textbooks counselor educators use, etc.

#### **MI Fidelity Measure**

Future research relative to the use of MI in schools should be conducted using a valid and reliable measure of fidelity to report how closely interventions align with MI principles and practices. In the absence of a fidelity measure, it is impossible for readers to ascertain whether interventions were conducted using high-quality MI and, therefore, whether they should trust the results (Jelsma, Mertens, Forsberg, & Forsberg, 2015).

Oftentimes, researchers have either not mentioned fidelity at all or have failed to use psychometrically valid and reliable measures (Ratanavivan & Ricard, 2018; Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013). At other times, researchers have seemingly gone beyond MI and have provided additional interventions which introduced confounding variables, as in the case of the goal progress worksheet (Strait et al., 2017; Terry et al., 2014). Using a valid and reliable MI fidelity measure such as the MITI scale (Moyers, Manuel, & Ernst, 2014) would help researchers hone their interventions and readers process results (Jelsma, Mertens, Forsberg, & Forsberg, 2015).

### **Continued Research Relative to MI in Schools**

Thus far, MI has shown promise as an intervention in schools. As researchers continue to study MI in schools, they should consider broadening the scope of the literature in a number of ways.

**Different levels of schooling.** First, researchers should compare the efficacy of MI among students at different levels of schooling. Much of the qualitative research in the United Kingdom and quantitative research in the US has been conducted with middle school students (Atkinson & Ames, 2007; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Snape & Atkinson, 2017; Strait et al., 2012; Strait et al., 2017; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014). Moving forward, researchers should conduct studies with elementary and high school students to assess MI's utility with students of various ages.

**Different effects among subjects.** The research team led by Strait and Terry repeatedly uncovered evidence suggesting that MI interventions helped students increase performance in math more than in other subjects (Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014). They acknowledged the phenomena but did not provide an attending

explanation (Strait et al., 2012; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014). As researchers continue to measure the academic impact of MI interventions, they should consider why MI has, to this point, been more effective in improving math grades.

**Other aspects of school success.** Thus far, quantitative researchers have primarily focused on the impact of MI interventions on academic performance (Strait et al., 2012; Strait et al., 2017; Terry et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2014). Several qualitative studies (Atkinson & Ames, 2007; Atkinson & Wood, 2003; Cryer & Atkinson, 2015; Kittles & Atkinson, 2009; Pincus, 2018; Snape & Atkinson, 2015; Snape & Atkinson, 2017) as well as a quantitative study (Ratanavivan & Ricard, 2018) have provided evidence of the positive impact of MI on behavior in school. In the future, quantitative researchers should examine the impact of MI interventions on other aspects of school success including attendance, social-emotional concerns, behavioral issues, and college and career aspirations.

### **Research Regarding MI and School Counselors**

There is abundant room for investigation regarding the utilization of MI by school counselors. Thus far, most of the projects investigating the effectiveness of MI in schools have relied on external therapists, graduate students, and undergraduate students to provide MI interventions. In the future, research teams should rely on school counselors to provide MI interventions. In so doing, researchers could assess the potential efficacy of MI in scenarios that closely align with realistic interactions between school counselors and students.

### **Summary of Discussion**



In this chapter, the primary researcher provided a short summary of the study including its purpose, methods, and participants. The researcher then summarized the project's findings, organizing them by research sub-questions: What is the format of MI training at various SCPPs? How did SCPPs' MI training come to be, how has it evolved over time, and how do counselor educators expect it to change in the future? On what MI ideas or techniques do counselor educators focus more or less? Which MI ideas or techniques are the easiest or hardest for SCTs to become competent using? Which training techniques do counselor educators find most effective? How do counselor educators evaluate SCTs' ability to use MI? How do counselor educators prepare themselves to train SCTs to use MI? What challenges do counselor educators face in training SCTs to use MI? The primary researcher then described implications of the findings including the need for a program-wide strategy for MI training, a shift to broader utilization of MI, clarity about essential aspects of MI for SCTs, and increased MI training for counselor educators. Next, the researcher discussed limitations of the study such as the primary researcher, scope, participant bias, and short engagement time. Finally, the researcher made recommendations for future research including descriptive research studying SCPPs and MI training, using MI fidelity measures, continuing research relative to MI in schools, and conducting research regarding MI and school counselors.

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## Appendix A

### Menu of Strategies based on Rollnick, Heather, and Bell (1992)

#### **1. Opening Strategy: lifestyle, stresses and substance use**

Rollnick *et al.* (1992) suggest that this provides the client with an opportunity to talk about current lifestyle and stresses. It may relate specifically to the behaviour that is perceived to be problematic. For example, within a school context where the issue is truanting, the EP might ask questions such as 'Tell me about you truanting?' or 'What do you do when you go out of school?'

#### **2. A Typical Day/Session**

This item would give the student the opportunity to provide an account of specific experiences. These can be related to times at which the problem behaviour did or did not happen. For example, a typical question might be 'Can we spend the next ten minutes going through a day in which ... happened/didn't happen?' (Rollnick *et al.*, 1992).

#### **3. The Good Things and the Bad Things**

*The good things and the less good things* would allow the pupil to examine some of the pros and cons of maintaining their behaviour. Rollnick and Miller (1995) highlight the importance of allowing a client to express the 'contradictory elements of the pros and cons associated with the behaviour'. Rollnick *et al.* (1992) suggest that this process allows the interviewer to assess whether the behaviour is then a cause for concern for the client. Rollnick *et al.* (1992) point out the importance of describing the 'less good things' rather than the 'concerns'. They suggest that this allows the client to identify problem areas without feeling that these behaviours are being labelled as 'problematic'.

#### **4. Providing Information**

Rollnick *et al.* (1992) suggest that the next stage of *providing information* should be dealt with in a sensitive manner, where the counsellor considers the readiness of the client to receive information. They advocate asking the permission of clients before offering information. The *providing information* stage of the process links to the idea of 'direct advice' described by Miller and Rollnick (1991) and to the goal 'to increase knowledge' explained by McNamara (1998).

#### **5. The Future and the Present**

The next item on the 'Menu of Strategies', *the future and the present*, is relevant to students who have expressed some degree of concern about the behaviour in question. This technique would allow the pupil to explore his/her present circumstances as well as eliciting any desire for change. Typically, this could be done through a question such as 'How would you like things to be different in the future?' and would link closely to solution-focused techniques.

#### **6. Exploring Concerns**

Rollnick *et al.* (1992) describe the stage of *exploring concerns* as the most important of all. This stage involves listening to what the student is saying and intervening at appropriate times to 'nudge' the discussions forward, and in doing so to raise concerns about behavioural change.

#### **7. Helping with Decision-Making**

In helping with decision-making, Rollnick *et al.* (1992) list the following key principles:

- Do not rush patients into decision making.
- Present options for the future rather than a single course of action.
- Describe what other students have done in a similar situation.
- Emphasise that 'you are the best judge of what will be best for you'.
- Provide information in a neutral, non-personal manner.
- Failure to reach a decision is not a failed consultation.
- Resolutions to change often break down. Make sure the student understands this and does not avoid contact if things go wrong.
- Commitment to change is likely to fluctuate. Expect this to happen and empathise with the student's predicament. (p. 35)

*Appendix B*

## Informal Invitation via Email to CESNET

**Subject:** Do You Teach in a School Counselor Preparation Program?

If so, please take a few minutes to help me with a study exploring trends related to Motivational Interviewing training in school counselor preparation programs.

**Who:** My name is Reagan North, and I am a high school counselor and doctoral student at Seattle Pacific University. Dr. Cher Edwards is my dissertation chair.

**What:** I would like to conduct a 30(ish)-minute interview to learn about how your program trains future school counselors to use Motivational Interviewing.

**When:** At your convenience. You are doing me a favor, after all!

**Where:** By video conference or phone

As a **THANK YOU**, please accept a **\$25 Amazon gift card** or a **\$25 donation** to the cause of your choice.

Please contact me with interest, questions, or feedback at [r\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@gmail.com](mailto:r*****@gmail.com) or 206.\*\*\*.\*\*\*\* or my dissertation chair, Dr. Cher Edwards, at [E\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@spu.edu](mailto:E*****@spu.edu) or 206.\*\*\*.\*\*\*\* (she is on sabbatical, so this is a cell number – Pacific Time Zone – I have permission to share). I appreciate your support as I complete my program to join the profession as a Counselor Educator!

**Title of Study:** *Training School Counselors to Use Motivational*

*Interviewing*

**IRB Approval:** 181906003

*Participant and institution identity will remain anonymous, and participants may withdraw at any time.*

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Reagan North

r\*\*\*\*\*@gmail.com

*Appendix C*

Formal Invitation for Involvement in the Study



**INFORMED CONSENT**

*Training School Counselors to Use Motivational Interviewing*

**Investigators:**

Reagan North  
Principal Investigator/Doctoral Student  
n\*\*\*\*\*@spu.edu  
206.\*\*\*.\*\*\*\*

Dr. Cher Edwards  
Co-Investigator/Faculty Sponsor  
e\*\*\*\*\*@spu.edu  
206.\*\*\*.\*\*\*\*

**PURPOSE**

You are invited to take part in a research project about Motivational Interviewing training in school counselor preparation programs. The purpose in conducting this project is to better understand how counselor educators in school counselor preparation programs train their students to use Motivational Interviewing. You have been invited to take part in this study because you have unique insight on the topic. The principal investigator will interview three to four counselor educators during the project.

**PROCEDURES**

To conduct this study, the principal investigator will interview counselor educators about how they train students to use counseling skills in general and Motivational Interviewing techniques specifically. The principal investigator will also search syllabi and textbooks used in clinical classes for information regarding Motivational Interviewing training. Involvement in the study would include: 1) participating in one recorded phone or video conference interview of approximately 45-60 minutes, and 2) helping the principal investigator access syllabi and titles of textbooks used in your program's courses related to counseling techniques. During interviews, participants may skip any question they do not wish to answer.

**RISKS and DISCOMFORTS**

Participants do not face immediate risk by being involved in the study. It is possible that participants could share unflattering information about their school counselor preparation program and, in doing so, put themselves at social and economic risk. The likelihood of this risk is minimal because the identities of the participants and their school counselor preparation programs will not be reported. The principal investigator will take great care to keep the identities of the participants and their programs confidential.

**BENEFITS**

The principal investigator will offer participants \$25 gift cards for their participation in the study. Additionally, the principal investigator hopes that the results of the study will benefit

their school counselor preparation programs as they consider their Motivational Interviewing training.

#### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed. Likewise, the Researcher may terminate your participation in the study at any time.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

Your de-identified data may be used in future research, presentations or for teaching purposes by the Principal Investigator listed above.

#### **SUBJECT RIGHTS**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,) you may contact the principal investigator (contact information above). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the SPU Institutional Review Board Chair at 206-281-2201 or [IRB@SPU.edu](mailto:IRB@SPU.edu).

#### **CONSENT**

**Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in this research project and agree to participate in this study. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities.**

**I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have received a copy of this form.**

<b>Participant's name (print)</b> _____	<b>Researcher's name (print)</b> _____
<b>Participant's signature</b> _____	<b>Researcher's signature</b> _____
<b>Date</b> _____	<b>Date</b> _____

*Appendix D*

## Interview Protocol

*Time of Interview:*

*Date:*

*Place:*

*Interviewer:*

*Interviewee:*

- *Name:*
  
- *Phone Number:*
  
- *Email Address:*

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:**

- Describe *purpose* of the study.
- Provide assurance of *confidentiality*.
- Explain ability to drop out of the study at any time.
- Ask for permission to record.
- Ask for access to course materials and permission to use in study.
- Ask if textbooks are listed on syllabi. If not, ask for names of textbooks.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. When did your program start training students to use MI, and how did that come about?
2. What is the progression of MI training across your program's courses and fieldwork?
3. On what MI ideas or techniques do you focus?
  - 3a. On what aspects of MI do you spend less time?
4. What training techniques do you find most effective?
5. What MI idea or technique is the most essential for school counselors to know or use?
6. How has the MI training in your program changed over time? Has it increased or decreased?
7. How do you prepare yourself to train students to use MI? What MI training have you received?
8. What challenges do you face in training students to use MI?
  - 8a. Which ideas or techniques do students naturally pick up?
  - 8b. With which ideas or techniques do students struggle?
9. How do you evaluate students' ability to use MI as they are being trained?
10. How would you like to see your program's MI training change in the future?



**WRAP-UP:**

- *Thank-you and Gift*
- Assurance of *Confidentiality*
- *Member Checking* in future
- Transcription and Results section