

Enhancing mediator skills: An introduction to motivational interviewing for mediation

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Motivational interviewing is a communication style that has proven to be helpful in assisting people to enact change in their lives, particularly when feeling ambivalent or reluctant. It has been proven to be effective in assisting people change across a diverse range of lifestyle and behavioural issues (including aggressive couple behaviour) and is an ideal strategy for all mediators looking for techniques to enhance agreement with ambivalent clients.

Success in mediation is measured by a variety of outcomes, one of which is the ability of the mediator to assist the participants to reach agreement. Recent research used trials to compare an enhanced family mediation process with the family mediation as usual process. The research found that mediators who were trained in motivational interviewing skills were able to significantly improve the rate of full agreement and significantly reduce the rate of no agreement in family mediation for custody and parenting issues (Morris, Halford & Petch, 2016).

This workshop provides an introduction to motivational interviewing techniques for mediators who aim to enhance their mediator skills. The contents of the workshop are largely activity based and will include background theory, practical skills training and rehearsal strategies, with a structure for integrating the techniques of motivational interviewing into the mediation process.

Morris, M., Halford, W.K. & Petch, J. (2016). *A Randomised Control Trial of Family Mediation with Motivational Interviewing*. Manuscript in preparation.