Conditions for implementing Motivational Interviewing in sickness insurance

The challenge of developing and maintaining skills

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Background

- In 2012, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (SSIA) launched an educational intervention to all officials to train them in Motivational Interviewing (MI)

  - Education (2+2 days)

  - Workplace coaches to support training and use of MI, through individual and group consultations

- The purpose of implementing MI was to improve the quality of meeting with sickness benefit claimants, and thereby the legitimacy of the SSIA

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What is MI?

- A recent definition of Motivational Interviewing (2009) is:

  "… a collaborative, person-centered form of guiding to elicit and strengthen motivation for change."

- MI has been evaluated with convincing results in several areas, e.g. smoking cessation and drug rehabilitation.

- While it has also been adapted to social work, its effects in such areas are less documented.

What is MI?

- Motivational Interviewing include three essential elements:

  1. MI is a particular kind of conversation about change (counseling, therapy, consultation, method of communication)

  2. MI is collaborative (person-centered, partnership, honors autonomy, not expert-recipient)

  3. MI is evocative (seeks to call forth the person's own motivation and commitment)

- **OARS** (**O**pen Ended Questions, **A**ffirmations, **R**eflections, and **S**ummaries) are core counselor behaviors employed to move the process forward by establishing a therapeutic alliance and eliciting discussion about change.

Aim and methods

Research questions:

- How do officials, managers and other groups within the SSIA perceive the conditions for using MI?

- How have these actors perceived the implementation process?

Methods:

- Two comprehensive data collections in four insurance offices, comprising interviews with officials, managers, sick-listed and coaches, and observations at meetings.

- Interviews with managers and coordinators

- Survey to all officials

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Results: MI and the SSIA

- Most officials and managers are positive to MI as a method

  - May lead to a positive climate in meetings

  - May lead to change for some claimant groups

- More skepticism to utilization in the SSIA

  - Do work conditions allow for use of MI?

    - Officials rarely meet claimants individually after the initial meeting

  - Can officials use and manage the information they get in a MI consultation?

    - Risk of entering a counselor role

  - Can MI be combined with exercise of authority?

    - The SSIA have two tasks: deciding on benefits and coordinating rehabilitation

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Why MI in the SSIA?

- Evidence based method!

    …but:

- Is the evidence relevant for the SSIA?
- Is MI used in a relevant way, with fidelity to the core components of the method?

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Results: The implementation process

- Was MI implemented?

  - Doubtful!

  - The results suggest limited utilization and lack of skills among officials

  - Officials reports limited time for training, due to an intense work situation

  - Officials did not perceive MI to be prioritized by the management

- All actors were critical to the implementation strategy

  - Coaches were not used as intended

  - MI was perceived as voluntary

    - MI is "on the shelf", "extinct"

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Developmental learning

- … needs enough organized learning activities, **active participation** by the management in the process, and that the right people partakes

  - Management commitment is crucial for success, sustainability and legitimacy in development work

  - Competence and sufficient resources for a supporting leadership

- Time for development

  - Tension between time for production (value-making by using existing competence), and time for learning (explore and test new ways of working)

  - Lack of time, **actual and perceived**, can hamper the organization's ability to develop

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Conclusions

- Organizational conditions determined whether MI was to be used or not, especially **case load** and perceived **managerial priority**

  - For implementation, sufficient **time for learning** and a **supportive management** is key

- The results also point to the need to **account for organizational conditions of implementation when assessing evidence** in evaluations and intervention studies, for MI as for other methods.

  - In this study, flawed implementation of MI could not be attributed to the method itself; instead, contextual factors were central for the applicability of the method.

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