

# Standards Unit

## Introduction and background to motivational dialogue

# Contents

## **Introduction and background to motivational dialogue**

- The rationale for developing motivational dialogue for Entry to Employment programmes
- The ethos of motivational dialogue and why it is important
- Some background to the development of motivational dialogue
- Glossary of key terms
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) reading list

## **Section 1**

- 1.0 About these resources**
- 1.1 What is motivational dialogue?**
- 1.2 How people change**
- 1.3 Helping people change**
- 1.4 Effective questioning**
- 1.5 Reflective listening**
- 1.6 Non-verbal communication**
- 1.7 Summarising for change**
- 1.8 Eliciting change talk**
- 1.9 Preparation and planning**

## **Section 2**

- 2.0 Five techniques**
- 2.1 The Wheel of Change for learners**
- 2.2 What's important to me? Value rating cards**
- 2.3 ABC technique**
- 2.4 Losses and gains analysis**
- 2.5 Scaling tool**

## **Annex: Glossary of terms used in Standards Unit resources**

# Introduction and background to motivational dialogue

This introduction is a brief background to motivational dialogue. It covers:

- the rationale for developing motivational dialogue for Entry to Employment programmes;
- a description of the ethos of motivational dialogue and why this is important;
- some background to the development of motivational dialogue;
- a glossary of key terms used;
- further reading.

These resources are for anyone who is supporting learning in E2E – tutors, managers and partners. We use the terms ‘tutor’ and ‘manager’ to cover the range of different job titles and roles of those involved in supporting learners in E2E programmes.



# The rationale for developing motivational dialogue for Entry to Employment programmes

## Why motivational dialogue can help your learners

As a tutor working with young people on the Entry to Employment programme, you will recognise that many of the learners you are helping have to overcome very real challenges if they are to achieve their goals. Frequently, these challenges are about aspects of their own behaviour – areas of their lives where they need to make a commitment to change. Motivational dialogue is an approach that can help you to help your learners make the changes that are important to them.

In E2E, learners bring a range of circumstances and experiences that can be barriers to engaging with and succeeding in learning. For example, they may have:

- low personal esteem;
- a history of offending behaviour;
- unsatisfactory previous educational experience;
- a history of low achievement and under-achievement;
- health, family and accommodation issues.

However, E2E learners have many positive and exciting attributes, which is why many people find it so satisfying to work with them. For example, E2E learners:

- can be imaginative;
- can be prepared to take risks;
- do not accept at face value what is told to them;
- have a wealth of experience – often beyond their years;
- manage complex lives;
- can be very supportive of each other;
- can be quiet, shy and timid, yet ready and eager to find out what to do next;
- can become good colleagues, working with you to support other hard to reach young people;
- have potential and can make significant progress;

- can be fun, witty and good company;
- can provide you with motivating feedback about your own skills.<sup>1</sup>

Young people, particularly those who have been labelled as disaffected or disruptive, often respond well to being supported by staff who demonstrate a genuine interest and commitment to helping them realise their potential. This ethos underpins the motivational dialogue approach.

The skills and techniques used in motivational dialogue are not difficult to learn, although you do have to practise them. Tutors in the pilot project, with training support, noticed a marked difference and success in the young people with whom they piloted motivational dialogue. You can see some of the tutors and learners from the pilot talking about their experiences in the video (on VHS and DVD) in this pack.

Here are some of the things they noticed:

- Learners appear to be more motivated to change behaviour.
- Learners are more active in reviews and willing to talk about themselves and what motivates them.
- Young people have asked for more review time.
- Using the techniques and practical tools with learners stimulates the interest of young people and increases their awareness of, and involvement in, the process of change.
- Using practical and visual tools helps to engage young people, especially those who do not enjoy talking in a one-to-one context.
- Dialogue with other professionals, for example *Connexions* Personal Advisers and Youth Offending Team (YOT) workers has improved.
- E2E tutors have been able to develop and adapt their own versions of the techniques and artefacts for working with learners and for training colleagues.
- Tutors feel more able to prepare for the meeting with their learners because they think about what skills and techniques they can use with an individual learner.
- Tutors find that they use the skills effectively in group and classroom situations as well as in one-to-one scenarios.

<sup>1</sup> *Connexions and Crime Concern, Involving hard to reach young people in the Connexions services: Why involve the hard to reach?*, [www.connexions.gov.uk/partnerships/publications/uploads/cp/ACFD1AA.doc](http://www.connexions.gov.uk/partnerships/publications/uploads/cp/ACFD1AA.doc).

## How motivational dialogue can help you support your learners

No doubt you have found that learners are motivated by a range of approaches. Most learners, for instance, enjoy getting on with practical and challenging activities where they can recognise their achievements. Motivational dialogue is not a substitute for other approaches that you and your learners find successful, it is an additional approach that you will find effective in many circumstances.

Learners may work successfully in several elements of the E2E programme and yet be stuck in one or more areas. When this happens you need to be able to identify how to help the individual move forward and make the changes they need. A particularly important element in this is to explore the gains and losses involved in any significant change. Motivational dialogue can help build a relationship between learner and tutor that enables this to happen and can be a powerful catalyst for change.

The resource pack covers six skills and five techniques.

### Skills

- effective questioning;
- reflective listening;
- non-verbal communication;
- summarising for change;
- eliciting change talk;
- preparation and planning.

### Techniques

- the Wheel of Change for learners;
- What's important to me? – value rating cards;
- ABC (Action–Behaviour–Consequences);
- Losses and gains analysis;
- Scaling tool.

You will already be using some of the skills and perhaps some of the techniques in this resource pack. We hope the resources will increase your confidence and ability to select and use the skills and techniques we demonstrate to make a real impact on individual learner progression.

Motivational dialogue can help you to:

- create a safe, non-threatening environment for discussing behaviour and change with young people;
- work in a structured and positive way with learners who are reluctant to commit themselves to learning or changing their behaviour;
- create empathy with the learner through using the specific skills and techniques that suit their individual needs;
- identify what kind of help is really useful at different stages in the learner's journey through change;
- challenge a learner's view – where necessary – in a non-confrontational way;
- assess a learner's readiness and motivation to change;
- help the learner to clarify their goals so that change can be supported with a realistic action plan.

It can help your learners to:

- reach the point where they are ready to discuss their behaviour and the changes they need to make;
- voice their feelings about change (it is the learner who must present the case for wanting and/or needing to change their behaviour);
- become more conscious of their behaviour and its consequences;
- realise that problem behaviour may conflict with their personal values;
- think things through and recognise that making significant changes involves both losses and gains;
- see that some of the satisfaction gained from poor behaviour can be substituted by the positives from any changed behaviour;
- clarify realistic goals more easily.

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**Does this approach provide enough challenge to the learner?**

Unlike some approaches, motivational dialogue is not passive. It addresses discrepancies and inconsistencies between the learner's perceptions and the way things really are or need to be. It allows restrictive attitudes and beliefs to be examined. It can challenge unrealistic aims but will also help learners raise their aspirations. However, the approach ensures that the learner does not see the challenge as an attack or a negative judgement. Instead, the challenge is more likely to be seen as supportive.

Motivational dialogue is non-confrontational in style and yet enables the learner to confront their own behaviour and its consequences.

## Helping young people move into positive destinations

The E2E programme helps young people gain the confidence and skills to move into Apprenticeships, employment and other educational and training programmes. The Adult Learning Inspectorate<sup>2</sup> (ALI) recognises that learners make enormous gains in self-confidence, self-discipline and self-worth while on the E2E programme. The challenge for providers is to help many more E2E learners move into positive vocational destinations so that they can develop the skills and qualifications they need to lead a fulfilling personal and working life.

There are several approaches you may take to help your learners develop and articulate their aspirations and make the changes they need to reach their goals. As an E2E tutor you will be engaging with your learners in many different ways:

- planning and carrying out activities that help them develop their personal and social skills;
- planning and supporting work experience so that learners can shape their vocational goals;
- carrying out learner reviews and helping them manage targets.

You will use a range of professional skills to support your learners and you will provide stimulating practical activities to enthuse and motivate them.

However, there are many instances when the support you provide needs to be directed to helping a young person make a **behaviour change**. When we use the term 'behaviour' in this resource we do not mean that the young person is necessarily behaving badly in the sense of being difficult or bad-mannered. The term 'behaviour' is used to describe what people say or do. We are referring to a particular behaviour that is presenting the young person with a problem in terms of achieving their goals. Because of this particular behaviour they are stuck. You can use the motivational dialogue approach to help unblock the problem.

<sup>2</sup> Adult Learning Inspectorate, *Entry to Employment: looking back over the first year and forward to the future*, January 2005.



### Examples from the learners in the resources

- Chantelle keeps missing her literacy class because she has always struggled to master reading and writing. Her literacy skills are stopping her obtaining the work placement she needs to enter the career she wants.
- Graham loses his temper very quickly when he is criticised. This has resulted in his losing two work placements.
- Jules has frequent late-night drinking sessions with friends. This is affecting her ability to perform well in her work placement.

You can see E2E tutors working with these learners on CD-ROMs 1 and 2 in this pack.

### Experiences of pilot providers

The tutors who took part in the Standards Unit pilot and helped develop these resources found that by exploring and using the motivational dialogue approach they:

- have a better understanding of the process of change;
- are better able to help their learners understand the process of change;
- are using skills and techniques that have a positive effect on their learners' willingness and ability to embrace change.

Learners involved in the pilot have said that they feel they have benefited from this approach and all learners involved, even the learners at risk of leaving, have stayed on programme. One learner who expected too much support from his key worker has learnt to take more responsibility for his decisions and actions.

**Fareport Training Organisation Ltd.**

### How to use these resources

The contents of the resource pack are fully described in the Overview sections in the Tutor workbook and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) ring binders.

The Overview also suggests how you might construct your own learning journey. Use it to plan how you will get the most out of the resources. Ideally, join a Standards Unit Subject Network so that you can take part in the CPD activities as well as following the self-study tutorials.

# The ethos of motivational dialogue and why it is important

You cannot force your learners to change. They will change when they are ready – not when they are told or pushed. The motivation has to come from them. Motivational dialogue gives you a structured approach to influence a young person's motivation to change the behaviours that get in the way of their progress. It was designed as a non-confrontational way of trying to help individuals recognise and do something about their present or potential problems.

In these resources you are introduced to some skills and techniques to help carry out successful motivational dialogue, but our starting point is the **ethos** of motivational dialogue:

- You adopt a quiet, friendly and respectful style.
- You recognise that your learners are the experts on their own feelings and behaviour.
- You help them explore and resolve their mixed feelings or ambivalence about change.
- You focus their attention on talking about change.

What do these statements mean for you? To what extent do you think that you already adopt these attitudes and behaviours in your work? You will recognise that talking in this way is very different from:

- telling;
- urging;
- persuading;
- confronting strongly;
- giving unsolicited advice.

Here are some of the characteristics that tutors exhibit in successful motivational dialogues:

- They exude belief, high expectations and optimism. However, they guard against giving false or unrealistic praise.
- They establish rapport and demonstrate empathy.
- They understand the learner's starting point and use appropriate skills and techniques to help the learner talk about their situation.
- They can convey acceptance without condoning negative behaviour.

- They take responsibility for creating the conditions that will help learners recognise and make the changes they need, rather than taking responsibility for the learners' actions.
- They plan and prepare for the dialogue that will help the learner to understand and resolve their mixed feelings (or ambivalence).
- They are equipped with the knowledge and support strategies their learners may need to help implement changes once they have decided to move forward.

It is possible to carry out a dialogue using the skills and techniques we develop in this resource and yet fail to achieve the impact that a successful motivational dialogue can have. You should use the skills and techniques **with** rather than **on** the learner, and you should not seek to manipulate them. Understanding and adopting the ethos of motivational dialogue is a vital starting point.

Motivational dialogue is a learner-centred approach to motivating people to change their behaviour. It's also quite directive in that the person who is helping the learner has a particular agenda for behaviour change that they are wanting the learner to adopt. But it is still very learner-centred because the tutor will be trying to bring the learner along at their own pace and using skills and techniques that are appropriate to where the learner is in the stages of change. What I like about motivational dialogue is that it helps to overcome the resistance that so many learners have about accepting advice from authority figures and from other adults.

**Paul Lalgee, subject matter expert,  
College of North East London<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Paul Lalgee is an expert in motivational dialogue who has worked with the Standards Unit to develop these resources. He appears on the CD-ROMs, where you can also read his profile.

# Some background to the development of motivational dialogue

Although motivational dialogue is different from many other approaches to behaviour change it does draw on skills and techniques from a number of approaches, such as:

- transactional analysis;
- cognitive behaviour therapy;
- person-centred counselling.

However, it is most closely derived from **motivational interviewing**<sup>4</sup>, an approach developed by Professors William Miller and Stephen Rollnick. Throughout the resource we emphasise the underpinning principles they defined.

The next few pages introduce you to some key concepts and terms. You may wish to return to this text as you work through the other resources in the pack – the concepts and terms will become more meaningful as you begin to practise motivational dialogue for yourself.

An obvious term to start with is **motivation**. We use the term in several contexts, for example:

- using motivating music to stir a crowd;
- using cheerleaders to motivate a football team;
- using bribes or treats to motivate ourselves to do something.

These are examples of **extrinsic** motivation, that is, motivation to act from external stimuli.

In motivational dialogue we are concerned with triggering **intrinsic** motivation. We define this as: **‘a readiness or eagerness to carry out an action or change behaviour’**. This state of readiness can fluctuate over time or from one situation to another. Intrinsic motivation is powerful and is what drives people to make important changes in their lives.

<sup>4</sup> Miller W. R. and Rollnick S., *Motivational interviewing: preparing people for change*, 2nd edition, New York, 2002, Guilford Publications, Inc.

Trying to determine an individual's overall intrinsic motivation to want to change feels a little like trying to get someone to describe to you how happy they are. One day they can be really up and yet the very next day they may feel down. Applied to change, on any given day, a young person may be very motivated to want to change while on another day something may make them less inclined to do so.

Motivational dialogue is about building a level of trust, working on building a rapport and conveying lots of empathy so that the learner feels that they can safely open up to you. You can't just jump into a conversation and expect a person to change their mind about the way they see their life or agree with you on what they ought to be doing.

**Ted Daszkiewicz, subject matter expert<sup>5</sup>**

Motivation is a complex aspect of human behaviour and there are many studies concerned with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, some of which are included in the further reading section. What is important in motivational dialogue is that **you** are working to help the young person explore and find **their own** motivation to change. What we might call resistance may be a signal that the learner is being pushed too far, too quickly. The tutor needs to be alert to change talk – but aware that motivation to change comes and goes. Learners need the time and space to strengthen their commitment to change.

### What makes motivational dialogue distinctive?

These concepts help to describe what is distinctive about motivational dialogue:

- It is **directive** – in the sense that you direct the learner to examine and resolve their ambivalence to change – and yet learner-centred.
- It acknowledges that people will have mixed feelings about making changes: they will feel **ambivalent** about change.
- When people make a successful change in their behaviour they go through distinct stages and these can be represented in a model called the **Wheel of Change**.

The ethos of motivational dialogue underpins the whole process.

<sup>5</sup> Ted Daszkiewicz is an expert in motivational dialogue who has worked with the Standards Unit to develop these resources. He appears on the CD-ROMs, where you can also read his profile.

## A directive approach

Motivational dialogue is directive and yet learner-centred. Its aim is to bring about the behaviour change that you think is important by helping learners to explore and resolve situations about which they may have mixed feelings. Unlike traditional counselling methods, you have an agenda for behaviour change. You and your learner agree that you will discuss the issue you have identified as important. The learner's responses drive the dialogue and you use your skills to help the learner talk about change: what we call change talk.

This means that you and the young person focus on what the learner needs to do, and you help them to:

- fully explore their situation;
- discover their feelings about their situation;
- begin to talk about solutions;
- make a commitment to change.

Although the approach is described as directive this does not mean that you use a confrontational or advisory style. Your main aim in the dialogue is to encourage the learner to talk about the situation as they see it and to help them talk about changing.

This approach is learner-centred in that the skills and techniques you choose to use are based on the needs of the individual you are helping and their circumstances, rather than on your personality, preferred style of interacting or the need for speedy agreement.

## Resolving ambivalence

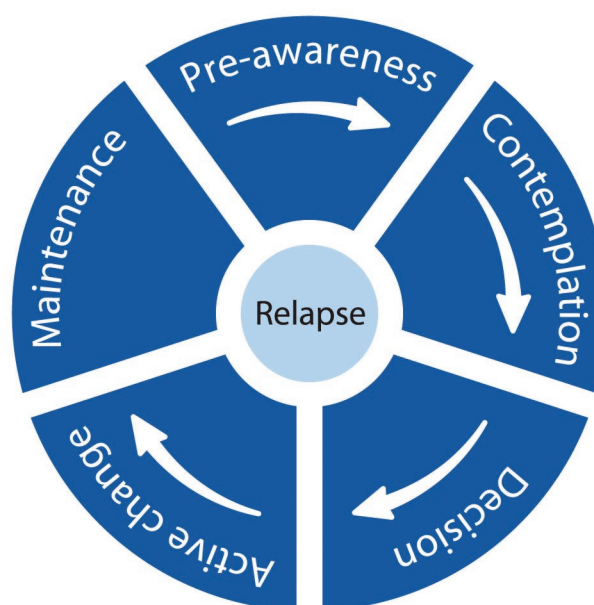
Motivational dialogue helps learners to explore and resolve their mixed feelings (or **ambivalence**) about change. The approach recognises that for any one of us there is a reason for engaging in a particular behaviour – we get something out of it or we would not do it. Consider smoking, for example. Smokers have many positive reasons for continuing the habit despite knowing about the health risks. They may feel ambivalent about giving up because they are weighing up the losses as well as the gains.

When you use the motivational dialogue approach you recognise that there will be both positive and negative factors involved in choosing to change. This is a crucial feature of the dialogue and one you may find most challenging to adopt. It is not easy to step back from the position of adviser or the adult who 'knows best'.

## The Wheel of Change

Motivational dialogue uses the Wheel of Change as the framework for the process. The Wheel is an adaptation of the model developed by Prochaska and DiClemente<sup>6</sup>. They described the process of behaviour change as one of distinct stages. People travel through the stages when they make any change in a behaviour and they are the same stages no matter what the behaviour. These stages can be represented in a wheel.

### The Wheel of Change



The Wheel of Change helps you and the learner to identify which stage in the change process the young person is currently in. It is essential to identify this so that you can be learner-centred and use the appropriate skills and techniques to help the young person move forward. Sometimes using the wrong techniques can discourage behaviour change and progress. For example, pushing the learner to define targets around a particular aspect of their behaviour when they are still in the Contemplation stage can be counterproductive.

On the following page is a summary of the stages of change. These are fully explored and demonstrated on CD-ROM 1, **Introducing motivational dialogue and developing skills**, CD-ROM 2, **Applying skills with techniques**, in the Tutor Workbook in this ring binder and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) resources in the accompanying ring binder. In the Wheel of Change activities box you will find an activity to help you construct a Wheel of Change and a set of learner statements to help you identify the stages.

<sup>6</sup> Prochaska J. O. and DiClemente C. C., 'Transtheoretical therapy – towards a more integrative model of change', in *Psychotherapy: theory, research and practice* 19 (3), pp. 276–88, 1982.

## The stages of change

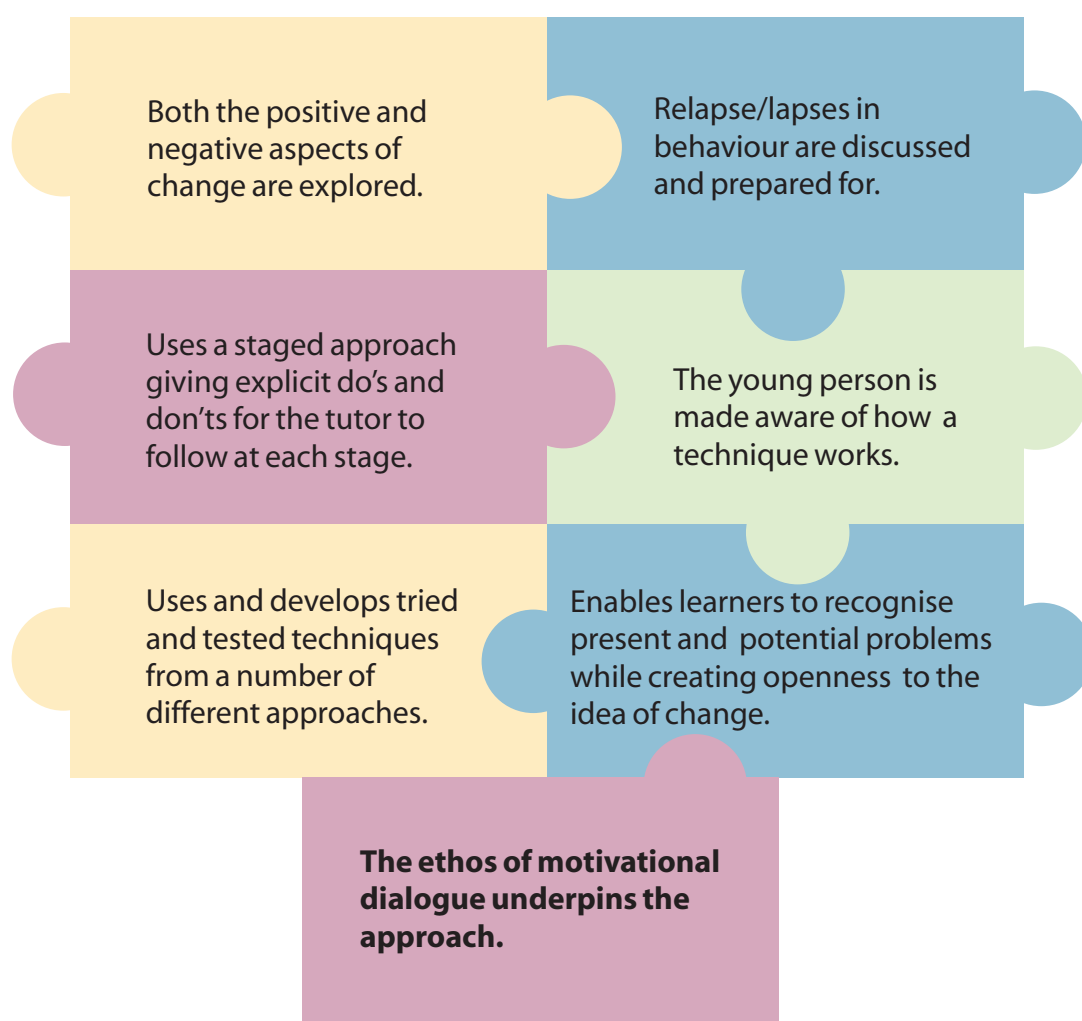
<b>Pre-awareness</b>	<p><b>"I'm not disruptive. There's others much worse than me."</b></p> <p>At this stage a learner has no intention of changing their behaviour in the foreseeable future. Many individuals in this stage are unaware of their problems or are not ready to change. It is not that they cannot see the solution: it is that they cannot see the problem.</p>
<b>Contemplation</b>	<p><b>"OK. Sometimes I do wind up the tutors."</b></p> <p>This is the stage at which a learner is aware that a problem exists but has not yet made a commitment to take action to change. The learner may be willing to consider the problem, however, and they experience various levels of ambivalence. This means that a young person has two opposing attitudes to change and can move backwards and forwards between them. Contemplation is not a comfortable state to be in.</p>
<b>Decision</b>	<p><b>"This time I'm not going to mess about. I want to get a good work placement."</b></p> <p>The learner is ready to embark on change. The tutor can help find an appropriate and effective course of action. If the strategy for change is inappropriate then the learner may slip back into Contemplation.</p>
<b>Active change</b>	<p><b>"I worked all day on the project without getting into trouble."</b></p> <p>The decision to change is put into practice. This is a very active period in initiating a change in behaviour. The learner can also be at great risk of relapse. The tutor needs to exploit all opportunities to support the young person's plans to change.</p>
<b>Maintenance</b>	<p><b>"I'm really getting something out of the project now and the tutor says I'm doing well."</b></p> <p>The learner is well on the way to successfully changing their behaviour. Maintenance is the test of whether the intervention has been successful. Helping maintain change may require the tutor to use a different approach and skills from those needed to accomplish the change in the first place.</p>
<b>Relapse</b>	<p><b>"I was doing all right but I don't like the new project and I've been winding up the tutor and the other kids all week."</b></p> <p>Relapse can happen during any of the stages. The inclusion of this stage acknowledges that, in many cases, changing behaviour is very difficult to do and may not always be successful at the first attempt. Lapses and relapses are expected, particularly when the change involves well-established behaviours.</p>



You can share the Wheel of Change with your learners to help them to think about their situation. It provides an easily understood, visual explanation of how the change process works. There is a learner version of the Wheel of Change in the **Wheel of Change activities** box, and you can see tutors using it with learners on the CD-ROMs.

In short, there are distinctive features in motivational dialogue that make it different from other approaches.

### The features of motivational dialogue



Many of the skills and techniques needed to ensure successful engagement with the learner are grounded in theory and are part of many other established behaviour change approaches. But the ethos of motivational dialogue that underpins the way you use your skills and techniques is what makes the approach particularly effective with E2E learners.

Motivational dialogue can become effective very quickly. In many cases, a single session can begin the process of change in learners.

# Glossary of key terms

Terms associated with motivational dialogue are used throughout these resources and you will soon become familiar with them. In the meantime, you may find this glossary useful to familiarise yourself with the terms and their meaning.

Term	Meaning in the context of motivational dialogue
<b>acceptance</b>	Non-judgemental position. You accept what the learner is telling you as representing the way they see things. You do not condone negative behaviour but nor do you express your opinion or make moralistic judgements about right and wrong.
<b>ambivalence</b>	Mixed feelings about a situation. A recognition that making changes involves both losses and gains.
<b>behaviour</b>	A value-free description of what a learner says or does.
<b>change talk</b>	Statements made by learners that express their awareness of the need to change, their recognition of the possibility of change and their willingness to plan how changes can be made.
<b>confrontational</b>	An approach in which the tutor assumes responsibility for making a learner face up to the need to change. It can lead to argument rather than dialogue and is rarely productive with reluctant learners.
<b>directive</b>	In the context of motivational dialogue, it means that you, the tutor, have an agenda: you agree the agenda with the learner and work with them to bring about the changes in behaviour that you think are important. You will help them to stay focused on doing what is necessary to support the changes.
<b>ethos</b>	The essential principles, values and guiding beliefs that underpin motivational dialogue.
<b>learner-centred</b>	In the context of motivational dialogue, it means that the learner carries the responsibility for making changes, and that the tutor offers support appropriate to the particular individual.
<b>motivation</b>	A state of readiness or eagerness to carry out an action or change behaviour.

# Continuing Professional Development (CPD) reading list

If you wish to deepen your knowledge of motivational interviewing and its academic background, you will find this reading list helpful.

Amatea E. S., *Brief strategic intervention for school problems*, San Francisco, California, 1989, Jossey-Bass.

Ashman A. F. and Conway R. N. F., *Using cognitive methods in the classroom*, London, 1993, Routledge.

Egan G., *The skilled helper*, Pacific Grove, California, 1990, Brooks/Cole.

Hall R. J. and Hughes J. N., 'Cognitive-behavioural approaches in the school: an overview', in *Cognitive-behavioural psychology in schools*, New York, 1989, Guilford Publications.

Miller W. R. and Rollnick S., *Motivational interviewing: preparing people for change*, 2nd edition, New York, 2002, Guilford Publications, Inc.

Miller W. R. and Rollnick S., *Motivational interviewing: preparing people to change addictive behaviour*, 2nd edition, New York, 1991, Guilford Publications, Inc.

O'Connor J., and Seymour J., *Introducing neuro-linguistic programming*, 1991, Aquarian Press.

Prochaska J. O. and DiClement, C. C., 'Transtheoretical therapy: toward a more integrated model of change psychotherapy', in *Theory Research and Practice* 19, 276–88, 1982.

Prochaska J. O., DiClementi C. C. and Norcross, J. C., *Changing for good*, New York, 2002, Quill-Harper Collins.

Richardson H. and Tomlin K. M., *Motivational interviewing and stages of change: integrating best practices and stages of change*, 2004, Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services.

Rogers C., *On becoming a person: a therapist's view of psychotherapy*, London, 1961, Constable.

## Web-based resources

### [www.motivationalinterview.org](http://www.motivationalinterview.org)

The website provides resources for those seeking information on motivational interviewing. It includes general information about the approach, as well as links, training resources and downloadable information on recent research.

## Opportunities for further personal development and learning

The skills and techniques we introduce here are only part of the full range of skills and techniques that experienced tutors employ – but they are effective and you will find them powerful. You will be supported in the Standards Unit Subject Networks to develop your practice and undertake further professional development.

## The E2E competence framework

The Standards Unit has published a set of resources that have been designed to support the upskilling of the E2E workforce: the **E2E competence framework** (August 2005). The resources are based on an E2E competence framework developed with many E2E providers in the learning and skills sector. The competence framework sets out the activities, skills and knowledge associated with the role of the E2E tutor<sup>7</sup> who has responsibility for curriculum planning, delivering and reviewing learning with E2E learners. Motivational dialogue is included in the framework.

The resources comprise an interactive CD-ROM and User Guide.

- The CD-ROM includes an interactive training needs analysis tool to help E2E tutors and managers identify the immediate training needs for E2E delivery teams. It also includes a job design tool that allows E2E managers to use the competence framework to define the requirements of a role and then design a job description.
- The User Guide and CD-ROM give examples of how the competence framework can be used, for example, in planning induction and Continuing Professional Development. The competence framework is mapped to a range of National Occupational Standards available at the time of publication. This provides useful signposting to tutors wishing to gain accreditation for their skills, knowledge and competence.

<sup>7</sup> In E2E it is recognised that the term 'E2E tutor' can cover a wide range of roles. In the competence framework we use the term to describe the roles that are necessary to support an E2E learner.