



the Link



healthy families
new york

the children of today are tomorrow's parents ∞ los niños del presente son los padres del futuro ∞ les enfants d'aujourd'hui seront les parents de demain

Motivational Interviewing & HFNY: A Great Combination

In This Issue ...

There has been much enthusiasm generated from HFNY programs that are using Motivational Interviewing (MI) in their work with families. In this issue, we provide you with some background on MI, and include information on the concepts, skills and tools of MI, and how they are a compliment to the approaches we use already, including what we learned about the Nature of Nurturing with Dr. Victor Bernstein. We interviewed staff from several programs about their experiences using MI so you can learn more about how we've adapted mainstream MI to fit the realities of our home visiting work. The Milky Way focuses on how MI offers great tools for effectively promoting breastfeeding. We also have a Spotlight on our colleagues at Healthy Families Parkchester. And, as always, we share news and great photos about the creative and important work going on in our statewide system.

I have learned more about my team and can better support their successes!"

—Treena Halsted, Supervisor
Building Healthy Families, Otsego County

This is an example of what we are hearing about Motivational Interviewing (MI). This article offers an overview of MI and shares excerpts from interviews with staff about how MI is impacting the work of programs around New York.

MI is a way of being with and talking with families that can help home visitors understand how parents think about change and their readiness for change. It is a set of tools that empowers, provides opportunity for reflection, and decreases resistance (Miller and Rollnick).

(Continued on page 4)

What Is Motivational Interviewing?

Ethelena Persons, PCANY

"Since participating in the MI Training series as a team, we are identifying where families are on the "Wheel of Change" and we can better identify our role at any given time and offer more appropriate information and referrals. As a supervisor, using MI concepts like "neutral praise" and "rolling with resistance," has helped me to encourage more exploration by home visitors and help them to lead the conversation.

Fall 2009

News from OCFS	2
Healthy Families Suffolk	3
Building Healthy Families Otsego County	3
Healthy Families Broome	3
What Is Motivational Interviewing	4-5
Spotlight on Healthy Families Parkchester	6
Healthy Families Oneida County	7
Best Beginnings	7
Spotlight Continued	8
Healthy Families Jamaica	9
Healthy Families Delaware County	9
The Milky Way: Motivational Interviewing	10-11

HFNY Goals

- To systematically identify overburdened families in need of support
- To promote positive parent-child interaction
- To ensure optimal prenatal care and promote healthy childhood growth and development
- To enhance family functioning by building trusting relationships, problem-solving skills and support systems

theLink

EDITOR

Pam Balmer, PCANY

MANAGING EDITOR

Ellen Butowsky, PCANY

LAYOUT & PRODUCTION

Jennifer Matrazzo, PCANY

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Bernadette Johnson, NYS OCFS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Christine Deyss

SUBMISSIONS

ellenbutowsky@hvc.rr.com

The Link is published two to three times yearly as a joint venture of Prevent Child Abuse New York and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services

PCANY

33 Elk Street, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12207
518-445-1273
cdeyss@preventchildabuseny.org

NYS OCFS, DDPS

52 Washington Street, 3N
Rensselaer, NY 12144
518-474-3166
Bernadette.Johnson@ocfs.state.ny.us

OCFS Update

By Bernadette Johnson, Program Coordinator, OCFS

An old man was walking down the beach just before dawn. In the distance he saw a young man picking up stranded starfish and throwing them back into the sea. As the old man approached the young man he asked, "Why do you spend so much energy doing what seems to be a waste of time?" The young man explained that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun. "But there must be thousands of beaches and millions of starfish," exclaimed the old man. "How can your efforts make any difference?" The young man looked down at the small starfish in his hand and as he threw it to safety in the sea he said, "It makes a difference to this one!"

I know many of you have heard that story before and while it was the theme of one of our training institutes, it is still so relevant to our work. Like the story, in our country there are millions of vulnerable families in thousands of communities, but here in New York we are making a difference.

Did you know that 5,669 families allowed us into their homes last year for home visiting? Did you know that we assessed 4,037 families last year for needed services? Did you know that 2,236 fathers participated in our program in 2008, and we completed 71,464 home visits! I would say that we are impacting the lives of vulnerable families. I would say that **we are making a difference.**

It is not just me saying this; our evaluation supports it! Compared to control group families:

HFNY mothers were nearly half as likely to have low birth weight babies;

HFNY mothers and children showed sustained access to health care;

HFNY mothers self reported less child abuse and neglect and negative parenting practices;

HFNY worked especially well in reducing child abuse and negative parenting practices for mothers who had marked depressive symptoms and/or a limited sense of control over their lives;

HFNY helped to promote positive parenting behaviors that have been identified in previous research to be predictive of children's adjustment.

In addition, our research team has provided information on the immediate return on the state's investment when HFNY begins working with families prior to the 31st week of pregnancy! Look for this information to be added to the HFNY web site soon.

Do we have more work to do with our families? Of course. We need to see more families earlier in their pregnancy. We need to help parents reduce stress in their lives. We need to help parents become more self sufficient so that when they move on they have the strongest chance of success. We need to help families stay focused on their importance in their children's lives. We *can* do this and make a difference for the families that allow us into their homes.

While you are busy at your sites working with families, we here at OCFS are also busy looking for ways to strengthen our relationships with you and other services providers, and working to find ways to better serve families, even with an enormous budget deficit! We are working with the Office of Prevention of Domestic Violence on a training curriculum that we hope will be available to staff at the end of this year and through next year. We continue to explore ways that our program can reach out to more fathers so that they see the value of their presence in their children's lives. We are looking at ways to better connect with pregnant and parenting teens that are in Foster Care, and to see how our services may fit in with support efforts for families living in counties participating in Differential Response to child protective reports.

Lastly, I wanted you to know that Terri Beers has moved to another position within the state. We wish her well and will miss her enthusiasm and creative ideas!

Thank you for all that you do for the families and children in New York!

Healthy Families Suffolk

On June 22, 2009, Healthy Families Suffolk hosted a family trip to the Long Island Children's Museum (LICM) in Garden City. The LICM is a hands-on museum for kids and their parents and it offers a variety of interactive places to play, learn and have fun. Six families and all of our program staff attended the event and it was a day full of fun, laughter, and education!

Our families enjoyed interactive playtime with their children in the Music Gallery, Pattern Studio, and Bubbleland. On the Sandy Island, they learned about Long Island's beautiful beaches! We even had HFS children and staff participate in the museum's live theater performance of "The Three Little Pigs." Watching our participants interact in a positive way with their children was the most exciting part of the day. We LOVE parent-child interaction!

Transportation to and from the LICM was generously donated by We Transport of Suffolk County.



Building Healthy Families Otsego County

The staff of Building Healthy Families Otsego County is pleased to share that 22 families attended our annual Graduation and Parent Group Celebration. Sixteen fathers, four prenatal families and lots of children joined in on the fun at a local park enjoying the playground, picnicking, and socializing. The graduates received certificates and backpacks in recognition of their participation. Each attendee received a party favor of bubbles that can be used to relieve stress and promote brain development. Parents wrote "heartfelt messages" to their children to post on a rainbow banner entitled, "Healthy Families Build a Brighter Future."

Healthy Families Broome

Healthy Families Broome families and staff celebrated their 2009 Graduation on August 21. Eight graduates and 30 family members attended the celebration. We saw lots of emotion as the graduates prepared to continue their educational journey with the Head Start Program. Each child received a backpack with all the necessary tools to begin the school year and every family received a diploma honoring this milestone and achievement. Parents also received a "parenting license" reminding them how important they are in developing their children's future and that they are their child's most important teacher. Aaron Bennett, Fatherhood Advocate (FA), led the children in a rousing sing along of "If You're Happy and You Know It." This helped give closure not only to the families but also to the FSWs and FAs who have built strong relationships over the last several years. Each family received a DVD of the event to commemorate this occasion.



What Is Motivational Interviewing?

(Continued from page 1)

William Miller and Stephen Rollnick, leaders in the field of Motivational Interviewing, observed that an MI style expresses empathy and supports participant self-esteem. It is described as a structured way of being with people that leads them to find their own answers and direction and that reduces resistance. This style is similar to the style encouraged by HFNY for use in home visiting. MI is a natural fit with the way HFNY serves families.

The Nature of Change

Why do people need to be motivated? Why can't they just do what they need to do? Two psychologists, James Prochaska and Carol Di Clemente, learned that most people do not wake up one day – out of the blue and say, 'I'll never do that again!' For most people, change is a process that involves going through a series of stages to learn how to change a behavior.

The stages of change model or the wheel of change, differentiate readiness for change which varies depending upon what stage a person is in. The representation of the wheel fits the change model because it means that a person can go through the stages several times before successfully changing. For example, the research showed that it took smokers between three and four times around the stages on the wheel of change before quitting smoking (Prochaska and Di Clemente). A basic assumption about the stages of change model is that people are at different stages of readiness for change. Some are ready to change immediately and others have no idea they even have a problem. People who don't want to change won't, no matter how much we want them to change. How we work with people can help or hinder their progress through the stages toward change.

Resistance and Ambivalence

Say you're on a home visit and have information the research confirms is in the parent's interest. In the middle of your pitch you notice a certain look that says, "Oh, please!" You imagine the parent holding up her hand like a stop sign. You know she is not ready to hear that information or to make the change you have in mind, and she won't. Despite knowing this, you're still frustrated.

When resistance is present, our partnership with parents suffers. Learning MI strategies helps us to figure out how to reduce resistance and increase collaboration. We learn to recognize resistance and roll with it by assigning the responsibility of change to the parent – where it belongs. Effective listening helps focus the process on the parent rather than the home visitor. It encourages the parent to explore what they think and feel.

Ambivalence is another feature commonly present when people are considering change. It means a person can feel two ways, at the same time, about something or someone. We can learn to accept ambivalence by staying neutral and by not agreeing with either the good or the not so good side; we learn to reflect both sides to show we understand a parent's struggle.

The home visitor learns patience because resistance and ambivalence can be strong and long-lasting. Resistance and ambivalence are not opposed – they are acknowledged as normal and understandable.

What We're Learning ...

Our reason for requesting the MI series was that we are a newer program and we thought it would offer staff some different ways of communicating with families. We weren't sure they had enough comfort using communication techniques they were taught in Core Trainings, and we had heard MI could support that.

We are seeing a difference in staff's "way of being" with families. They are much more aware of how they are coming across, and they think more about their approach. Even in team meetings—someone will say 'Are you using MI?'

My own approach to my work has changed. I think it made me take a step back and look at myself as an administrator. I am very goal oriented and often on a mission to learn information from my staff. Going to the training taught me that there are other ways to gain information that I wasn't using before. You can apply MI to an administrative role and do even better the things you need to do as a director. I always like to look at how I am coming across, and it helped me to ask, 'Am I being effective with my employees?'

—**Janelle Montgomery**
Program Director, Healthy Families Delaware County

At first, from the title, I was assuming we were going to be learning how to 'motivate people.' Going into it, I quickly realized that you're not really motivating them, it really is finding out how motivated THEY are. It helps us to do a job better instead of spending time spinning our wheels.

For me, being a man and just being the way I am, I go in and try to fix stuff. The MI way of approaching families takes a lot of that pressure off. I don't have to worry about everything. I find a way to incorporate a scaling tool and then I know where to put my energies. It's made my job easier and I've heard the same from other workers as well. I see my supervisor using it too, so the parallel is there for me in supervision.

It can be a lot of work to change your whole reaction to things; it takes a lot of practice. To help me, I made a cheat sheet from the Stages of Change and Approaches grid that we were given in the training. With some families, before I go into the home, I look at it so it is fresh in my mind and it helps me remember where the family is at and what my goals are for that visit.

—**Chris Shortell, Fatherhood Advocate**
Starting Together, Madison County

The Main MI Strategies

The old saying is, "It's not what you say it's how you say it." In addition to engaging families and building a relationship based on mutual trust and respect, effective communication is essential to succeeding with families.

The elements of MI and its tools and strategies go well with the principles home visitors learned in core training and practice in their work with families. The MI style of working with families places emphasis on staying neutral and leaving choices up to the participant; ideas familiar to home visitors. MI introduces the concepts of resistance and ambivalence, which are often characterized as negative or uncooperative behaviors. Clarifying their true meaning and purpose enhances understanding of how normal these states of being are.

"OARS" is central to MI. Its use helps home visitors build rapport, establish trust and create an atmosphere that encourages participants to talk more and feel comfortable sharing and exploring their concerns. The acronym stands for open-ended questions (O), affirmation (A), reflection (R), and summary (S). The strategies, used alone or in combination with other tools, can help reduce resistance and explore ambivalence.

Description of the MI 3-day Series

Our current MI work evolved from an FASD pilot project in 2006 that was a collaboration between the Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY) training team, the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, the Office of Children and Family Services, and the HFNY program in Buffalo. The PCANY training team provided input in developing and modifying traditional MI concepts to fit the work of home visitors. These early modifications have been re-worked over the years, building on these experiences and listening to and learning from the feedback programs provided, and resulted in the current MI Series and supporting materials we have now.

PCANY offers the MI training over three days, each day separated by several weeks. In the time between each session, program staff visit with participant families and try skills learned in the classroom, taking note of what works and the challenges that arise. During this time, homework assignments, transfer of learning (TOL) activities, supervision and team meetings provide individual and group practice at the program sites. These experiences are recalled and discussed in the following days when the group gets back together with the PCANY trainer, and the group has an opportunity to work together again for skill practice.

Summary

MI requires relating to people in a non-judgmental, collaborative manner and the process of change is facilitated rather than coerced. Home visitors function as partners that help parents talk about their ideas and how they feel and think about them. MI style communicates safety and support

through an absence of confrontation or persuasion, and by acceptance of parents.

As the PCANY training team continues to work with the home visiting programs, we have been learning how to more effectively apply MI strategies within the context of home visiting and working with families.

Thank you to the program staff who gave their time to be interviewed for this article by Ellen Butowsky, PCANY.

What We're Learning ...

Before I had trouble with open ended questions. In this training, with practice, practice, and more practice, I finally learned to use them.

MI has helped me to explore more with my families and get them to open up more about their goals. For example, I was able to help a very young and shy teenager open up about her IFSP goals. We got at what she really wanted. I also use the MI idea of self efficacy. For example, I had a mother who was very unsure about her parenting abilities and I helped her reflect on her past successes and it gave her confidence.

Having a follow up day with Ethelena Persons (PCANY) for our site support visit really helped us to keep MI alive, as well as my supervisor always asking when we talk about a family: 'And how will you implement MI?'" This training helped me not just with my families, but with my own family and friends as well.

—**Crescencia Mark**
FSW, Healthy Families Jamaica

I work with some people with developmental disabilities and MI works quite well with them. Using reflection, we use the person's own words. Someone with developmental disabilities might not always understand our way of speaking, so MI keeps us safe from that since we give them their own words back.

Since the training, I see myself reflecting back to people much more. Reflecting makes their feelings concrete and it can help them move forward. The reflection I offer can give someone a light bulb; hearing what they've just said can make someone figure out for themselves whether they want to make a change or not.

I find reflection really helps in assessment work, like in trying to get at the need for possible referrals. I use the stages of change a lot. I was sitting with a mom once, talking, and I got a visual of her sitting inside of that wheel!

One way we keep MI alive in our program is both my supervisor and director now include it in their QA feedback and on the form they use when they do observations of me.

—**Rayeann Stein, FAW/FSW,**
Healthy Families Delaware County

Spotlight on Healthy Families Parkchester

—Compiled by Soraya Lithgow, Program Manager

From Jessica Hernandez The Special Uniqueness of Healthy Families Parkchester

- Here to hear what our families have to say
- Educate families about healthy childhood growth and development
- Acknowledge families' strengths and personal goals
- Learn from the families that we serve
- To conduct tummy time as part of the activities
- Have and hold the belief that things do get better as families progress in the program
- Yearn to strive and succeed

- Face challenges with our families
- Achieve positive outcomes
- Make every family visit a quality visit
- Identify risks and address issues with our families
- Learn and discuss with each other
- Integrate positive and effective techniques so that our families feel empowered for their own personal self-growth and self-esteem
- Empower families through education, independence and support
- Strengthen the families' circle

- Provide information and referrals as necessary
- Accept families for who they are and not what they do
- Respect our families' views, behaviors, cultural beliefs, experiences and expectations (BBEE)
- Kind and helpful to our families
- Comfort families in times of crisis
- Have non-judgmental views
- Expand and share views with the families
- Show families that they are important
- Teach families different parenting techniques that they may have not been aware of
- Enter as a visitor and respect the families at all times
- Reach out to families and let them know that there are people who care

Healthy Families Parkchester (HFP) is located at 1990 Westchester Avenue in the Parkchester area of the Bronx, and has served families in the Parkchester and Sound View communities (zip code 10462 and 10472) for a year and a half. We are located across the street from our public library, and we are close to various clinics, department stores and restaurants that serve foods from all over the world.

HFP's host agency is Catholic Guardian Society and Home Bureau (CGSHB). Since 1899, CGSHB has

provided services to families from all walks of life and religious affiliations, and HFP is a natural fit with the services we've always provided to our community. Everyone on our team contributed to this article to give a broad sense of our program, as seen through all of our eyes.

From Kim James, FSW

I think HFP is unique in the way we care about our families and try to help them with their different situations. For example, a new participant had just come to our community. She was pregnant and had nothing for her new baby. We all

put our heads together and gave her a surprise baby shower. All the home visitors, our FAW, and Soraya, our Program Director, made something to eat and brought a gift. The family came to the office thinking they were going to have a meeting with their FSW and Soraya. When they came into the room, you could tell by the mom's face and her tears that she was certainly not expecting a baby shower. While mom and dad do not speak a word of English, when they saw how much HFP cared about them, they said some words they knew: "Thank You."

From Carmen Torres, Stephanie Washington, FSWs and Yelissa Navas, Data Manager

Starting this program has been a learning process for all of us. We have



Healthy Families Oneida County

Congratulations to Bryant Mathis, Fatherhood Advocate on the birth of his son, Darren William Hartlieb-Mathis, born on July 21st, 2009, 6 lbs, 10 oz! Besides being a brand-new dad, Bryant is very busy with the Father's Fellowship Meetings twice a month, and is our spearhead for the Father's Day breakfast, and all Father-affiliated activities at the Nurturing Center.

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass; it's about dancing in the rain." And that's just what we did at our 8th Annual Healthy Families Picnic! Despite the rainy weather, our picnic turned out to be a wonderful experience of which we were all proud.

We honored our graduating families as well as families who have been enrolled in the program for one year or more. We enjoyed games, prizes, an obstacle course, balloons, face painting, music, lots of food and even a clown! The County Lead Prevention Program also set up a booth and joined in the fun! It's a wonderful and rewarding feeling to both educate families and enjoy them as well. The entire Healthy Families staff had an important role in bringing together this wonderful event.



Darren William Hartlieb-Mathis



8th Annual Healthy Families Picnic

Best Beginnings

Best Beginnings held its 14th annual summer event for families on August 14th. We provided participant families with a "Family Day" at one of our local parks. Forty adults and 48 children enjoyed being outdoors and participating in activities and games that focused on promoting parent-child interaction and enhancing the parent-child relationship. Parents also had a great time getting know each other and networking among themselves.



Spotlight on Healthy Families Parkchester

(Continued from page 6)



Top left Soraya Lithgow, Program Director; top right, Kim James, FSW; lower right, Yelissa Navas, Data Manager; lower left, Stephanie Washington, FSW; center Carmen Torres, FSW

learned to work as a team among staff as well as with our families. At HFP, we use what we've learned about strength-based and evidence-based practice to help families move forward. We promote breast feeding, involved fathers, and lots

of tummy time. Most of all, we promote unity in families which helps children succeed in school and contribute to our community.

We have reached a lot of prenatal and postnatal participants and provided them with support, understanding and parenting education. We have retained so many families in our program because of the great relationships we have formed; many see us as a part of their family for the hour we are in their home. It's rewarding to see how many families we have enrolled in the program and how we make a difference in our participants' lives.

One of the things that makes HFP so great is its staff. We are a diverse and versatile group and bring a lot of professional and personal experience to the work we do. Everyone on staff, from the home visitors up to our director equally make the time and find the strength and resources to do what is needed to serve our families.

We feel proud as an organization to contribute and give support to families in our community!



Yasmin Velez, FSW, upper left with Stress Management Support Group

Group Activities From Yasmin Velez, FSW

At HFP, we do lots of activities with our families including exercise classes, a housing support group, health fairs, and a Mother's Day lunch. In June, along with bilingual guest speaker Ruth M. Warwick, ACSW, LCSW-R, I conducted a support group for all the participants in our Healthy Families program to talk about the stressors in their lives. Examples of stressors included finances, school, family, pregnancy, and work. We talked about how stress affects our lives, how it can cause depression, ways to cope with stress and the importance of communicating for finding solutions. I used chocolate kisses as an incentive for participation; they had much to say about their stressors.



Housing Support Group



Mother's Day Lunch

One of the most popular activities was one we did with five hats, each representing a different characteristic. For example, head phones represented isolation and

not wanting to be bothered, the clown hat represented not taking things too seriously, the cop hat represented an authoritative personality, the vacation/stress hat represented the things that stress you on one side and where you want to be on the other, and finally, the independence hat was for the person who feels and acts responsibly. As participants passed the hats, they explained which hat most represented them, and why.

The support group went very well and I have participants still asking when we will do another one. It felt great to meet a need that our participants had to talk about the stress in their lives.

Healthy Families Jamaica

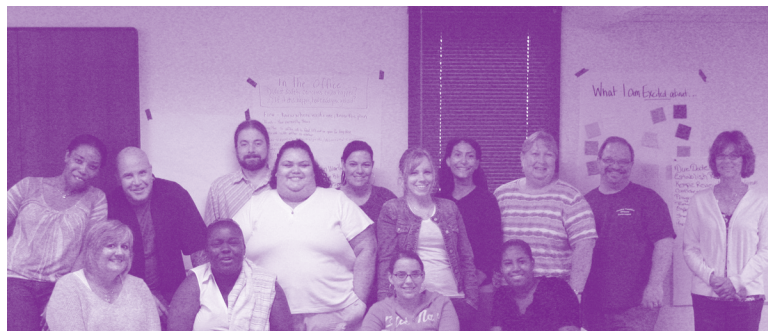


Healthy Families Jamaica held its 2nd participant graduation ceremony on June 22nd . We had six families graduate after having been in the program for five years. Our graduates were elated to be honored with the ceremony; they have accomplished their goals and given their children a healthy start in life. We also honored Crescencia Mark as our Family Support Worker of the Year. She had a home visiting achievement rate of 95% and has retained most of her families for the year.

On August 7th, in collaboration with Safe Space's Community Health Worker program, we held our annual Community Baby Shower. This event is an outreach effort to engage more pregnant women in the Healthy Families Jamaica and Community Health Worker programs, as well as to make our presence more known in the community. We had a grand turnout of thirty-nine pregnant women! Everyone had a great time with games, gifts, raffles, food, and a workshop on lead prevention.

Healthy Families Delaware County

Healthy Families Delaware County participated in a hugely successful Children's Festival on July 21st. The event was sponsored by our host agency, Delaware Opportunities and was open to all residents of Delaware County. The Healthy Families program staffed a table with fun, interactive activities for children to see cause and effect. For young toddlers, we had a corn table in a sand box and showed what happened when they buried small toys in the corn. For older toddlers, we had "Orange Juice Squeezers" where they had half an orange in a zip lock bag and then zipped in a straw and got to drink what they made! This second activity also taught parents low cost activities they can do with their children. Staff and families all had a great time!



FSW Training Wendy Bender, PCANY Core Trainer

Olean, August 2009



The Milky Way

Rayza DeLaCruz-Stitt, RN, MSN
Program Director
Bushwick Bright Start
Certified Healthy Families Trainer

MI & Effective Breastfeeding Support: What's the Connection?

(To the tune of Frere Jacques)

*When you counsel, When you counsel
Never Judge, Never Judge
Praise mother and baby, Praise mother and baby
Do suggest, Do suggest¹*

(Read on and see how "suggesting" is not an MI strategy!)

FSWs and FAWs learned this song in their Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) Training. They were taught that telling the families what to do while counseling about breastfeeding is never a viable technique to help families succeed with nursing their babies.

After their Motivational Interviewing (MI) training with Prevent Child Abuse New York, our CLCs would change the word from "suggest" to "inform." Providing information rather than making suggestions is an example of an MI strategy. It also fits very nicely with the Healthy Families New York empowerment approach.

MI strategies can help families make informed decisions about their infant feeding choices. The family's decision to breastfeed their baby will be more beneficial to the family when it is based on their own motivation to nurse and conviction that it is the best choice for their baby and family.

Iriana Rooks, BA, Sr. FSW, CLC, from the Bushwick Bright Start HFNY program shared her experience and thoughts about the benefits of using MI strategies and techniques when she was working with a breastfeeding woman named Ms. G. Iriana

shared that she started the conversation about infant feeding during Ms. G.'s pregnancy so that she did not feel the urgency she'd have felt if she'd commenced this conversation postnatally. She shared that she found it easier to maintain neutrality and go at the participant's pace because there was no imminent need to feed a baby yet. Iriana began with a focused open ended question: "What are your thoughts about breastfeeding?"

We had received the MI competencies created by PCANY during our training and Iriana did a great job of reflecting competency #5: Recognizing when MI is an appropriate strategy². She shared: "The mother said that other women in her family breastfed their babies, and she would likely breastfeed too. She went on to say that her mother breastfed her own sibling who is now 9 years old, and she still remembers that breastfeeding experience. She was very interested in breastfeeding."

Iriana said that it was tempting to give the usual praise such as, "Good for you," but remembered that this type of response would label the mom's intent as good or bad and take Iriana out of her neutral

(Continued on page 11)

¹ Credit: Adenike Grange, Medical Officer MCH, World Health Organization, Lagos, Nigeria

² Motivational Interviewing 3 Day Series, Binder: MI Competencies Outline, Prevent Child Abuse New York/Healthy Families New York, 2009

stance.

Instead, Iriana said, "I thought of scaling tools! On a scale of 1-10, how motivated are you to nurse your baby? She said 8 or 9! I saw a window of opportunity. I recognized that the mother was at the determination stage on the wheel of change."

Iriana expressed disappointment that while she remembered to use the importance ruler, she did not also utilize the confidence ruler. This is a good example of how it takes practice to change your communication style and integrate these tools into your practice.

Iriana continued: "But I knew I wanted more information, and asked: 'Tell me more about what puts you at a 9 rather than at a 7?' Ms. G went on to list the many benefits of breastfeeding, including those she sees in her 9-year-old brother. After this, the curriculum was easy to implement because my information just reinforced what I'd learned that she already knew."

When Iriana saw Ms. G. at the hospital after delivery, her baby was jaundiced and very sleepy. It is a common practice in the hospital to give these babies "supplemental" bottles to "get them to feed quicker." The mother was now wondering if her baby was going to get enough milk at the breast. Iriana talked about how MI helped her to avoid the dogmatic approach that we sometimes fall into using when teaching about breastfeeding.

Iriana said: "Oh no, now she was back at the contemplation stage and considering whether bottle feeding could be easier. The next time this comes up, I will know to pull out the confidence ruler. I needed to tap into her feelings that her baby might not have been eating enough and help her explore what blockers are getting in her way. I would also like to help her get back in touch with her commitment to nurse her baby by helping her recall the high motivation that she expressed prenatally. I will continue to give her the objective information regarding frequent breastfeeding increasing the milk supply, and about nipple-confusion. I did call the hospital Lactation Consultant after Ms. G. gave me permission to do that. That way she could have another resource. The LC gave her the clinical stuff, and then I was more confident to continue supporting her.

Ms. G. and baby are still nursing (and giving occasional bottles). What makes me feel good is that this is HER decision. The MI training has given me the confidence to understand unacceptable and disagreeable, and support the family in making their own decisions."

Our adaptation of the CLC song:

*Use your MI, Use your MI.
Never judge, Never judge.
Affirm mother and baby, Roll with the resistance.
Just inform, and support.*

Thank you Iriana, the G. family and baby

PCANY's Newest Team Member

My name is Caroline Chant and I am the newest person on PCANY's Training and Staff Development Team, having joined in October 2008.

As some of you may know, I was previously involved with Healthy Families New York. Before joining the PCANY team, I took a year or so spending time at home with my family and training for marathons in my spare time.

Before that, I was with the Ulster County Healthy Start Program for 8 years. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to wear many different "hats:" I started out as an FSW Supervisor, moved into the role of Home Visiting Coordinator, and finally ended my time there as the Program Manager. I feel strongly that those experiences, and my understanding of and respect for the Healthy Families model, is really beneficial to my work as a Staff Development Specialist.

I currently live in Stone Ridge with my husband John, and 12 year old son, Michael.

I am truly excited to be returning to the Healthy Families team wearing yet another "hat," and am looking forward to working with programs and watching them grow.





Roving Reporter!

When you've seen families make a positive change, what have you seen that has made the difference?

Ellen Butowsky, Prevent Child Abuse New York



Petra Lohmann
Healthy Schenectady Families

Crisis equals change. Given a choice of sink or swim, most families will choose to swim. Having a baby can also be a motivator. I've seen people realize, "it's not just about me anymore." It also seems connected to the Willa Cather quote we heard in our supervisor's training: "There are some things you learn best in calm, and some in storm."



Jennifer Wright
Healthy Families Ontario

For families to make a positive change, you need to build a good relationship and have a good rapport. That's the starting point for you to be able to work with them through the change. You can only be helpful to them if they don't feel judged, and they trust you.



Isabel Miano
Newburgh Healthy Families

I'm thinking that part of the change came when the mom saw I accepted her for who she was and that I didn't judge her like others had. I always talked to her about the choices she had to be the parent she wanted to be. I worked hard to give her credit for the positive things she was doing. By pointing those things out, it helped her to feel capable as a parent and that I think made her do even better as a parent.



Crista Tandle
Healthy Families Cayuga/Seneca

A positive and supportive person being involved in their life! Healthy Families staff highlights the families' positive attributes and encourages SMART goal setting!

Nonprofit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Albany, NY Permit No. 785

Prevent Child Abuse New York
33 Elk Street, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12207-1062

the Link
healthy families new york

Prevent Child Abuse New York

Fall 2009

The children of today are tomorrow's parents. It's our responsibility to ensure that every child grows up in a safe and healthy home. We are committed to providing the support and resources that every child needs to thrive.