

**JobAssist „Better Employment Competences through individualized e-training“
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Motivation

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What is motivation

The term motivation can be defined in various ways. The general consensus is that motivation is something that stimulates behaviour and guide individuals towards a certain direction. In other words, it is an internal condition that activates certain behaviour, which is turned on by certain factors, for example arousal or desire and is a sustained goal-oriented behaviour. Factors like how much the need is, or is desired, encouragement or reward offered and expectations are likely to alter specific behaviour. Motivation is then, the willingness to learn, for example an individual with a strong motivation cannot refrain from studying all things about the new technology invented to recycle plastic but an individual with weak motivation is not willing to listen to what expert says and does about recycling plastic, even though it is important for our planet (Huitt, 2011).

Behaviour is in fact constant ... and people do not change their
behaviour so easily

Motivation: internal and external

It is possible to list the reasons for individual's effort by internal and external reasons. Internal reasons are unrelated to the external environment but external reasons are unrelated to the individual. An individual is governed by internal reasons if he wants to start recycling, f.ex. household waste because it is challenging, fun and for some part rewarding in itself, it makes the planet safer. On the other hand, an individual who is governed by external reasons says that he recycles because he wants to please the government, or he is afraid of punishment.

External motivation

External motivation is rather when the reason for our behaviour or for the action is not because of pleasure of performing the work, but because of some kind of reward from the outside. A good example of this is an individual performing on a daily basis in his work is

only to earn money in order to support his family. Then the earnings are the reward and the work is not necessarily rewarding in itself. Then our awards, our monthly salary are more important and guide our behaviour more than if our works are fulfilling our needs or desire.

There are also more than one factors of extrinsic motivation. For example, is the motivation ready-made and does not have in itself anything to do with the work, our performance? If the award comes to a person without him/her doing nothing, perhaps only showing up in his workplace and he/she gets their salary monthly it is ready made and in fact the individual will not make any efforts in the work place. It might also be other factors that motivate us in our workplace, for example increased self-confidence after learning new things in, or better communication skills etc.

Internal motivation

Internal motivation is the opposite of the extrinsic motivation. We do not show up at our workplace only to get rewards (salary), but we also get some fulfilment in our work. The main purpose is to enjoy, regardless of specific outcome or rewards (our salary or promotion). Intrinsic motivation is when we find work in a specific workplace or project that appeals to our skills and we allow our talent to bloom. Here, is the continuous feedback, the process, the work provides this feedback and in itself, is a pleasure even though we do not get big or rich rewards, our salary.

It is important to note that most individuals have the need to control themselves, and they need to be able to “save” themselves without any help from others. This might be the necessity for independency; most individuals have the need to control their own actions and to make their own decisions even though they are at work. If and when we are forced to perform something, even though it is in our job description and our interest, it is possible that the directive reduces our interest. For most individuals, as soon as they think they do not act on their own terms, it might reduce their interest. In other words, it is significant that the interest is spontaneous, that the interest is rooted within the individual and their experience would bloom and develop. Therefore it is better to motivate and encourage people with praise for a job well done rather than with promises of big money. So there is a discrepancy in, what research has shown and what general public does and/or believe.

Most individuals also have the need for constant challenge. It is not enough to have independency and have a power of our environment, but they need a challenge otherwise they will be bored easily. Our attention constantly tries to have something challenging to do; we

need tasks where both our talent and knowledge flourish to grow further. Those assignments can then neither be too heavy nor too easy. Individuals need tasks that are possible to solve, are sufficiently challenging to keep us on track (so our power of observation flourish) and may not be so heavy that individuals feel that he/she lack the ability to finish it. To help individuals to find their motivation is to find a project that meets their skills and abilities in order to help them to perceive how useful their talent is, and they can grow and thrive.

The application of internal and external motivation

As seen in the above the internal and external motivation has different influence on individuals. It is probably not possible for anyone to utilize their own internal motivation all the time. Sometimes external motivation is necessary to help employer to keep going in a hard and strict work session. That said, it is also necessary to mention that too much external motivation might turn the individual off, and even contribute to a loss of interest. So if individual gets “only” reward in form of more payment, more vacation or free time or other privilege, it will not necessarily give more work back. The main purpose is to “force” the individual to work and meanwhile undermine his independence. It might be a form of coercion and individuals might find that their work will not have any value at all. Other motivational factors, like praise is better to support the employee and provide information about how he is performing in his work. Such motivation is more likely to increase greater interest and enthusiasm. The same goes for individuals who are looking for a permanent job but how do we increase their motivation?

How to increase the motivation

Internal motivation affects the willingness to change. It is possible to enhance motivation by encourage clients to make their own decisions, to do something satisfying or constructive on their own behalf. Of course it is different and unique for individuals what triggers motivation for them but the first step is a dialog about behavior change or Motivational Interviewing (MI).

Many individuals who have either searched for a long period of time for work or haven't gotten suitable employment might develop various problems, for example, futility, powerlessness and even depression and anxiety. MI is useful for individuals that may not have recognized the need for change and are even opposed to them, while others consider changes

but are confused. With this approach it is possible to discuss various objectives and goals to enable our client to make a positive change in their job search, even in their lifestyle and behavior.

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing (MI) helps individuals to be ready, prepared and better qualified to be employed again or for the first time. It is a model of both techniques and knowledge about how to change. MI is a person aimed approach and never used confrontation to get changes. In MI, it is the individual personal strength which is most effective. When the individual hears discrepancies between what he thinks or wants and his own behaviour changes will begin. Employees working with individuals searching for work needs then to enhance their skills to meet their clients where they are now and then. They need to elicit individual's thoughts and stimulate them to bring out their own thoughts and also to stimulate their proposal about new ways, a positive changes and probably new work advancements. This method is then all about conversation and the will to cooperate. Professionals enhances their skills not to go certain ways in the conversation, homilies or moral sermons are only designed to encourage rebellion and reduce the will to change. It is very important to respect the independence of the client, their right to make their own decisions within appropriate limits (Miller and Rollnick, 2009; Beckley, n.d.).

Five Principles of Motivational Interviewing

- ✓ Develop Discrepancy
- ✓ Express Empathy
- ✓ Amplify Ambivalence
- ✓ Roll with Resistance
- ✓ Support Self-efficacy

Elements of Motivational Interviewing

MI can be used for various purposes, but there are always the same elements at work. It does not matter whether it is in therapy treating bad habits like smoking, to stop alcohol or drug use or helping individual to find a job. Those elements are; first and foremost to minimize or reduce resistance, also to create and increase individual's perspective about the future. Help individuals to find out inconsistencies or discrepancies between previous behaviour and their goals and values. MI elements also help to solve and explore mixed feelings about certain issues. All this leads to changes in internal talk from the individual him selves in natural way, not that the individual expresses what he believes that the therapist wants to hear. MI contains open ended questions; the client needs to think deeply about his or her abilities, desires and expectations. The professional compiles the information from his client, gather facts and helps the individual to support himself and use his/her ability to reflect. Last but not least the professional should show warmth understanding and empathy, then it is more likely that the client uses his/her skills to cope with his/her own discrepant thoughts and behaviour and not become resistant towards the person helping them (Beckley, n.d.).

Motivational Interviewing - Conversation about changes

It is important to get the client to talk about the ways he would like to change. For example, why it is important for him/her to get a job and/or perhaps possibly change his/her focus for a job. In conversation about behavior change it is the client who talks mostly; active listening stimulates his or her internal motivation. The motivation increases when our clients have the opportunity to have the initiative in the conversation. If the individual begin to show resistance it is more likely that he/she have experienced a controlling attitude and then it is more likely that he/she get a sense of himself as an failure or that he/she did something wrong. In order to help them begin there are two good questions that turn on motivation to change behavior: First, what are the benefits of the change and second, what are their believes of their own ability to change. It is also quite usual that our clients have ambivalent thoughts.

Two crucial questions

1. What is the benefits of the change
2. What is the belief of their own ability to change

To ask questions in MI it can be helpful to use a measure scale, 0-10, where 0 means not at all important and 10 means really important. With that scale the individual can better explain both to him-/herself and the professional how large the benefits are and how much his/her belief is. So if the professional wants to know how or even whether a client sees the benefits of a change, he/she can ask the clients to evaluate how enthusiastic he/she is with a question like: On the scale of 0-10 where 0 means not at all important to change and 10 means it is extremely important to change, how important is it for you to get a job? The answer gives the tone for the continuing conversation. If his answer is 3 he has rather little desire to get a job, he/she does not find a good reason to get it. If that is the case, it is necessary to ask why he chose exactly this number and not lower figure. If the number is higher it is possible to strengthen the faith of his own ability and that would be the next question.

Belief in own ability to change behaviour is based on various things, for example how it has been previous in situations similar to the one he/she is in presently, and also how others have done in similar situations, whether he/she knows what to do and if he/she has support from their environment. It is good practice to continue to ask the client to evaluate how much he believes he can change his behaviour on the scale 0-10. The question would then be: On the scale of 0-10 where 0 means absolutely no belief that you can change your behaviour and 10 means you believe you are well capable of changing your behaviour. If the client responds with higher number than 0 it is possible to ask him why he chose this number because the more we let the client talk about his/her ability the more it will increase his/her belief in his own abilities. If the client is asked extended questions about whether he knows about something that would raise the number, i.e about faith in his/her abilities, most often he/she will raise the number. It is not only important to talk about the positive things, it is also important to discuss various problems and find solutions to them. If the individual does not deal with the difficulties there is likely that his/her believes in their own ability reduces.

There is often *ambivalence* in our conversation with our clients. Our clients are uncertain in their own methods to change behaviour. For example individual that has not

worked for a long period of time wants both – begin in a work and have a free time. He/she are insecure because they find both pros and cons in their behaviour or the change. The professional role is to help the individual reasoning for and against keeping their behaviour using their own words. It is likely that relevant person will try to strengthen his/her belief that they can do something. If a person hears that there is a discrepancy with her/him, then it will be easier to help her/him to motivate himself forward, for the common good. Practitioners do not make things happen and do not change their client's behaviour. All changes come from internal motivation by the client after discussing the issues at hand. Practitioners help the client to discover where he stands, and what he needs and then the client is responsible for the outcome of it all (Beckley, n.d.).

Four Basic Skills in Motivational Interviewing

- ✓ Open - ended questions
- ✓ Affirmations
- ✓ Reflective Listening
- ✓ Summary Statements

Example of questions used by employee in the employment agency in Akureyri

Following questions are what the staff in The Regional Office of Directorate of Labour in Akureyri uses as reference in their interviews with individuals.

1. Setting focus

What do you want to talk about your job search today?

What five things would benefit you most in your job search?

What of these five things are in a priority regarding job search, what would you prioritize? (e.g. CV, apply for more jobs, go on courses)

Anything else that you consider to be a priority?

2. Inform about possibilities

What is the best thing that could happen?

What conclusion would you like to see?

This is one possibility, can you list another one?

3. Decide process

What need to be done?

With whom do you need to talk?

What is most important at this moment?

What do you need to do to get this job or job in general?

4. Remove obstacles

Which obstacles do you expect?

What do you need to complete this step?

What stands in the way?

What other changes need to take place?

5. Review/summary

What, if anything have you obtained from our conversation?

When summarizing our conversation, is there anything else that you can think of?

How real are these processes?

Is there anything else you want to ask or talk about?

What are the next steps?

Can we “change” us self and perhaps find our own motivation?

For some individuals, it is a difficult task to motivate themselves and perhaps there are many factors and combinations that play a big role in the motivational process. When an individual does not believe in himself and can hardly say to himself: “I think I can”, “I think I still can” and “I am doing it” it is harder for him/her than others to motivate themselves. It is a question whether we can forever expect others to inspire us towards compassion, or should we learn to do it, always? So, how can we find what is needed so we feel better and live a richer life? If we want to achieve some goals it is not just about having discipline, it is a matter of motivation and keeping focus on what you want.

For many individuals, getting started is quite difficult. Some days are just hard and heavy and it can be difficult to open the door and go out to do what you need to do. Instead of thinking about how boring or difficult it is or how long time it will take, you need to start somewhere. It seems hard before you start, but it gets easier once you start doing what you need to do.

Focus

Too many individuals think negative thoughts instead of positive, they see the glass half empty, but not half full. People are busy finding all things hard and unfair and many are afraid of almost everything, they are stuck in their own couch instead of taking part in the life. When individuals always know what they do not want, it will drain them, they do not focus on what they would like. So instead of not wanting something, begin to want what you have and if you do not have it, work for it. We always have a choice. We can decide if we brush our teeth and hair. Maybe we would like to have more money, better looking car and so on but first and foremost, be thankful for what you have and work for the rest. Our self-talk is strong and we do not realize how often we talk to us self in a negative ways. To be focused it is necessary to monitor our thoughts. Positive thinking can be really powerful and gives us the extra strength we need to accomplish what we want in life.

We can link together ambiguity and fear. Fear does not keep us motivated, instead of us being in action and doing something that may frighten us, we are exhausted and stuck in our lives. We need to go out of our comfort zone and think out of the box to meet our fear. We do not know what might happen but we will not know it if we do not try. Fear of one thing in our lives can easily transfer into other sides of our lives.

To obtain something, we need to know what we want. We do not want to know what we do not want, so instead saying things you do not want, begin to tell the world what you want and tell it to yourself. I might say to myself: “I want to be financially dependable or weight a little less” but not: “I do not want to be broke or be so heavy”. Make some decisions, where will you start? Do you need to take more classes, get a better paid job or find a job or go to the fitness center? What else do you need to do?

Make a plan with simple steps, not too many at the time, because we cannot change everything in one day or one week. Your plan or your to-do-list should have few items at the time. Perhaps it would be better to call it *must be done list*. If we have a lot of items on the list it is more likely that we get overwhelmed, stop doing anything and end up being guilty and

exhausted. Take it slowly, one step at the time and your focus will be clearer. It is hard to stay focused if you have not specific goal to focus on, so one task at the time.

It is useful to look at other individual's success stories; it can even be good for you. You might actually begin to think, if he can do it I can do it.

Have fun

Do not forget to have fun in your life. It is more likely that you stop doing things you need to do if you do not find anything fun about it. Another thing that is connected with joy and happiness, is simple be here in the moment. Individuals are constantly with their heads somewhere else, like when you are writing an email you begin to think, "What should I have for dinner tonight?" or "If I only had not bought this car last year" and so on. If we cannot be here and now it is not likely that we enjoy all the things we are trying to acquire. A good way to find happiness and also "quiet" the mind is Mindfulness.

Mindfulness simply means to be in the moment, be aware of our thoughts, feelings, our bodily sensations and our surrounding environment. In mindfulness there is acceptance, we observe and examine our thoughts and feelings without judging and the way we think or feel is not right or wrong in the moment. When practicing, little by little our thoughts tune into the present moment, not into past nor the future. Mindfulness is all about getting our attention once more than we lose it. Mindfulness is not a religious matter, even though roots may lie back to ancient Buddhist practice and does not conflict with beliefs, religious, cultural or scientific matter. Practicing Mindfulness helps us to train our attention and we get more control over it, be more focused (for more information and exercises see http://palousemindfulness.com/selfguidedMBSR_week1.html). When practising Mindfulness, individuals begin soon to hear and feel all the little stuff, birds singing, a light sunbeam on their skin and so on. We cannot feel those little things around us when we are stuck in our autopilot mode, driving like there is no tomorrow and running like we are in marathon.

Rewards

If individual decide to do something to make themselves feel better, it is better to set a goal. For example, on order to keep one's book-keeping on the right side, or take off few pounds here and there, it is necessary to have rewards. It is not necessary to set a big goal and should not be, but a few little objectives on the way to the goal. So do not use one big reward in the end, cut it up and please you a little. Of course a better finances or healthier body are great

rewards but this is funnier. There is not much chance that you will endure enough if you are taking it on your fist and beat you through everything. You only live once – keep it simple and keep it funny with little rewards.

Maintenance

As said above, people are really good in the autopilot mode. If you walk many times through certain place you soon will not notice anything. When we get used to things or surroundings we stop noticing. If we do not stimulate our senses we stop paying attention to the life, so again, step out of your comfort zone and do everything differently for time to time. If we have not reach our goals we need to open our eyes and find a new approach.

Overwhelming goals are not good, and if those goals take long time it is sometimes even insurmountable. After days or weeks our motivation goes away because the thought it will take more weeks or month to accomplish, the motivation flies away like a leaf in a strong wind.

Another technic to keep us on track is to write on a little notes – write something that keep you going, positive message and leave them in various places. Last but not least, refine your original plan if you need to, review everything and if something is not working, do not be afraid to change it. We are no less human beings if we change our minds that is, if we are not cheating on ourselves. If you are not good in keeping on track tell your best friend what you are doing and you have pressure to stay in track because it can be difficult to stay motivated on your own. It is also much better if your friend or partner is doing similar things. You can also file down how your progress has been, it is often better to see on paper what has been achieved and what not. It is also good to visualizing your goals, try to visualize how you think it will be when you have finished, even cut a picture of it from some magazine and imagine it is yours.

If you fail to make your life better today, there is always a tomorrow. If something does not work, give yourself a permission to grieve it for few minutes and then continue. Be patient, give yourself a time, while you wait after the progress, please enjoy the life even though all those steps seems to be a long and difficult. There are always new ways to find out what you want or need to do to reach your goals, do not make mountains out of molehills.

Exercises

Pair exercise – Should we travel together?

Two individuals work in pairs as A and B. This exercise shows how you can achieve specific results, either positive or negative with the right question. This shows us what our own attitudes matter. When A has asked B they switch position.

A asks B: „Shall we go for a trip?“

B answers, but can only use: „yes *but* ... and then assertion“

A responds back with the same beginning: „yes *but* ... and different assertion“

A asks B: „Shall we go for a trip?“

B answers, but can only use: „yes *and* ... and then assertion“

A responds back with the same beginning: „yes *and* ... and different assertion“

Pair exercise – Your dream job

Two individuals work together as A and B. A starts telling his/her dream work and lists three positive aspects regarding to get a work like this, and then three things that he/her might think would help him to get this job. B answers and points to more positive things that A could take advantage of. The A and B will change position and B tells A his/her dream work.

Pair interview exercise – Where is your strength

Working in pairs, A and B ask each other following questions, it does not matter who begins. Each person gets 15 minutes to ask and write down their answers. The purpose of this exercise is to find a positive strength within each other. Feel free to add new questions if you think it appropriate and will help.

What strengths do you have?

What else do you do well?

Can you tell me one more thing you are good at?

What have you done so far, that makes you proud?

What effect does it have on you?

What effect does it have on other people?

How would you feel if you could do more of it?

What would make you even more proud?

What rewards would you want after achieving the desired outcome?

What qualities or strength do you have that your friends appreciate most?

Why do you think they appreciate these qualities?

What would you like to learn more if anything?

What do you think that will strength you as a person?

What do you think has been the highlight of your life so far?

How did you feel? How would you feel if you experience highlights like that more often?

Pair exercise – Bad into better

This exercise is simple and will be used to help people to view things differently, to see more positive things. This exercise helps to show individuals that there might be something good even behind a negative experience. The core thing in this practice is to help each other to see and experience many sides of a difficult thing, because there is always multiple sides.

In the beginning the trainer divide participants to pairs, A and B, and ask them to think for a minute about incident or moment that all went wrong. A starts to tell B about certain incident, then B answers and retells the same incident, using more positive aspects. Each pair work together and try to see all points about and around the experience, this should take about 15 minutes. Next, participants swap position and do the same. When both individuals in each pair have done their round, all participants are called together and discuss their experience of this exercise. Some would not like to express themselves in the group and should not be forced, but the trainer should try to gather positive experiences and bring it forward in order to show how positive thinking can be more effective than negative one. Questions as; how can positive view on a problem help you to feel better? Could your partner help you to achieve a different perspective on you problem or your experience? How? Is there a possibility that you will use this method in the futures, i.e. looking at all aspects of a problem or experience? How do you think that positive power will help you more than negative thinking?

Individual exercise – The amazing question

Imagine you woke up and all of your problems have gone away, you have a clean table, what is different from yesterday? What would you do today? Now, you have found out what you would like to do if you could do anything? What can you do today that supports your dream and your dreaming future? Write a few sentences about that topic.

Individual exercise – Imagine

This is a five minute exercise; participants and trainer discuss the content afterwards.

Close your eyes and imagine that you have already start working, how do you feel? Use a scale of 0-10 where 0 means bad feeling but 10 a great feeling.

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Various online content

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- <http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm>
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