DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI) PROJECT

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FINAL

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary objective of Disability Employment Services (DES) is to achieve sustainable employment for DES participants. The 2012 Disability Employment Service Provider Survey, conducted by the (then) Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, identified poor motivation as one of the major challenges for providers in helping some job seekers to engage with services and obtain work. This finding provides a strong rationale for further research on ways to encourage and empower DES participants to participate in the labour market by improving motivation to engage in job search activities or further training.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a collaborative, person-centred approach to eliciting and strengthening a person’s motivation for change. MI explores and resolves ambivalence and supports change in a way that is congruent with a person’s own values, beliefs and wishes. MI is an evidence-based practice, commonly used in assisting individuals with significant challenges, such as mental illness or substance use disorders and addictions.

This project seeks to better understand if MI can be used to encourage motivation and commitment to change among job seekers with disability and the potential of MI to lead to improved employment and training outcomes. The research will also help to understand how processes and interactions for developing Employment Pathway Plans might benefit from MI.

Limited research has been published on the use of MI to help unemployed people enter the labour market. A review of international literature has indicated that a small number of pilot studies have been undertaken in a range of disability employment service type settings. The findings of these studies reinforce the value of the current study in relation to the Australian context.

Evolution Research was commissioned to conduct this project to gain a greater insight and understanding of the use of Motivational Interviewing (MI) to encourage motivation and commitment to change among job seekers with disability, and the potential impact that MI may have on improved employment and training outcomes for these participants.

The overall aim of the project was to assess whether adopting MI in casework assists employment consultants to better engage with and empower DES participants to develop an EPP and actively look for work.

The strategies incorporated in the project approach were designed to enable evaluation of the above aim via:

- Facilitation of MI training to DES Consultants;
- Feedback from DES consultants on the relevance and practicability of MI in helping job seekers;
- Measurement of changes in DES participant motivation to engage in job search activities or to undertake further training that will lead to employment;
- Feedback from DES participants regarding interviews with DES consultants;
- Participant and DES consultant satisfaction with EPP processes involving MI; and
- Identification of any issues experienced in using MI in DES settings.

Despite limited timeframes of the project and competing demands which prevented broader application by DES consultants with participants over the project period, the overwhelmingly positive feedback from DES consultants and many participants indicates that the use of MI in casework assists employment consultants to better engage with and empower DES participants to develop an EPP and actively look for work.
Initial evidence suggests that the use of MI can result in effective employment, training and health outcomes for job seekers with disability in a relatively short period of time. In addition, participant feedback indicated that the MI approach generated more appropriate goals, strategies and outcomes based on the person’s individual situation. Participants observed significant changes in the consultant’s style during the project, reporting that they felt more included in the conversation and had greater input into their employment prospects. These changes were observed to result in an increase in the motivation and ownership of the participant’s employment pathway and it is anticipated that this would be likely to lead to increases in employment retention.

In considering the approach to providing MI training in DES settings, international literature indicates that it should take into account a systemic approach, rather than a one-time training. The introduction of such an evidence based practice requires a change in the culture and practice of the employment service. These perceptions were echoed by DES participants in the current study who felt that subsequent reinforcement of training would be beneficial. A change by organisations to a process-based approach rather than a primarily outcomes driven approach would help facilitate this change.

The success in the application of MI for most did not clearly transfer into the production of more effective EPPs. Although many DES consultants and participants acknowledged the setting of new goals and strategies to achieve these goals, these were not clearly articulated in the EPP. Exploring the impact that MI can have on EPPs unearthed a significant inconsistency of the role that the EPP plays in the employment process as perceived by DES consultants. Whilst some consultants view this document as a useful tool to set goals and strategies to assist the jobseeker, others view the EPP as a compliance document that should only contain broad overarching goals.

In summary, the feedback and evidence gathered clearly indicates that MI is an effective method of engaging job seekers with disability and a broader application of MI should be encouraged.
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ACRONYMS

ADHD – Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
DES – Disability Employment Service
DSS – Department of Social Services
EPP – Employment Pathway Plan
KPI – Key Performance Indicator
MI – Motivational Interviewing
OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
SIMS – Situational Motivation Scale
2 INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The primary objective of Disability Employment Services (DES) is to achieve sustainable employment for DES participants. The 2012 Disability Employment Service Provider Survey, conducted by the (then) Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, identified poor motivation as one of the major challenges for providers in helping some job seekers to engage with services and obtain work. This finding provides a strong rationale for further research on ways to encourage and empower DES participants to participate in the labour market by improving motivation to engage in job search activities or further training.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING IN EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a collaborative, person-centred approach to eliciting and strengthening a person’s motivation for change. MI explores and resolves ambivalence and supports change in a way that is congruent with a person’s own values, beliefs and wishes. MI is an evidence-based practice, commonly used in assisting individuals with significant challenges, such as mental illness or substance use disorders and addictions.

Limited research has been published on the use of MI to help unemployed people enter the labour market. A review of international literature has indicated that a number of pilot studies have been undertaken in a range of disability employment service type settings. The findings of these studies reinforce the value of the current study in relation to the Australian context.

International literature indicates that employment support services often lack components to intervene with individuals demonstrating ambivalence about finding and continuing work. A large body of evidence indicates that motivation is an important element in returning to work, and initial international studies are positive in relation to the use of MI in the employment field. Motivational Interviewing is thought to have the potential to be a good fit for vocational rehabilitation settings – it is not intended to replace the skills and expertise of employment consultants, nor is it intended to turn them into therapists – it is intended as a strategy and additional skill-set for employment consultants to use when working with their clients. A qualitative study undertaken in the United States of America (USA) which explored employment consultants’ experience of using MI with their clients found positive effects of using MI. The described potential benefits of using MI in employment settings included that consultants can work with clients to: reduce resistance; help resolve ambivalence about obtaining employment; resolve ambivalence about behavioural barriers to employment; and develop clear, achievable vocational goals.

In considering the approach to providing MI training in DES settings, international literature indicates that it should take into account a systemic approach, rather than a one-time training. The introduction of such an

3 Manthey, et al. (2011)
evidence based practice requires a change in the culture and practice of the employment service. Some of the key benefits to achieving such a change through the implementation of MI training are described as: improvements in consultant skills; minimisation of staff burnout; reduction in client resistance; and resolving of ambivalence about work. In addition, specific benefits have been reported for the use of MI with employment service clients who have a mental illness. An analysis of international literature reported that people living with mental illness may have difficulty forming vocational goals in their early recovery period and may need skilled assistance – the application of a carefully considered MI approach was indicated to be of assistance in this regard.

A pilot program similar to the current project, undertaken in the USA, found that MI training can lead to important attitude shifts and knowledge of MI in employment service staff who received the training – that is, staff were found to have shifted personally held attitudes that are considered essential for practicing MI. This shift is considered an essential component to consultants being effective in gaining the potential benefits that can be achieved through use of MI with their clients. Further to the initial training, studies have also found that consultants benefit from further refreshing and reinforcement of training in order to develop and maintain motivational interviewing skills.

**PROJECT PURPOSE**

This project seeks to better understand if MI can be used to encourage motivation and commitment to change among job seekers with disability and the potential of MI to lead to improved employment and training outcomes. The research will also help to understand how processes and interactions for developing Employment Pathway Plans (EPP) might benefit from MI.

The intention of the EPP is to underpin the provision of services to a job seeker. The EPP is an individually tailored plan that identifies the job seeker's vocational goals, and records the activities the job seeker will undertake to reach these goals. If a job seeker has an employment services provider the plan will also list specific ways the provider will support a job seeker to improve their employment prospects and gain sustainable employment. The EPP should be reviewed and updated at each contact with an employment services provider to reflect changes in the individual's circumstances, participation requirements and the activities they are undertaking.

The EPP caters for all job seekers with activity test or participation requirements and also non-activity tested job seekers. Government policy requires all recipients of DES (job seeker), who have activity test or participation requirements and do not have an activity test exemption, to have a current EPP. Under social security law, income support recipients with participation or activity test requirements cannot qualify for payment unless they are prepared to enter into and comply with the terms of an EPP when required.

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5 Manthey, et al. (2011)
8 Secker & Margrove (2014)
Evolution Research was commissioned to conduct this project to gain a greater insight and understanding of the use of Motivational Interviews (MI) to encourage motivation and commitment to change among job seekers with disability, and the potential impact that MI may have on improved employment and training outcomes for these participants.
3 METHODOLOGY

PROJECT APPROACH

The overall aim of the project was to assess whether adopting MI in casework assists employment consultants to better engage with and empower DES participants to develop an EPP and actively look for work.

The strategies incorporated in the project approach were designed to enable evaluation of the above aim in order for Evolution Research to report on the effectiveness and usefulness of MI in DES service settings. The strategies included:

- Facilitation of MI training to DES Consultants;
- Feedback from DES consultants on the relevance and practicability of MI in helping job seekers;
- Measurement of changes in DES participant motivation to engage in job search activities or to undertake further training that will lead to employment;
- Feedback from DES participants on interviews with DES consultants;
- Participant and DES consultant satisfaction with EPP processes involving MI; and
- Identification of any issues experienced in using MI in DES settings.

The key stages involved in the project are identified in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage/Activity</th>
<th>Project Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Interview Training</td>
<td>Consultants attended a two-day training delivered by Dr. Kate Russell. All consultants were required to have an existing case load to ensure that the techniques covered in the training can be applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Interviewing - Implementation</td>
<td>DES consultants were required to trial MI techniques where appropriate with as many participants as possible during the implementation period. Consultants were required to administer pre and post Situational Motivational Scale (SIMS) questionnaires to measure any motivational change of the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES Consultant Focus Groups</td>
<td>Post MI application focus groups were held to collect feedback on the application, impact and usefulness of MI techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Interviews</td>
<td>DES participants were asked to attend voluntary one-on-one interview with an Evolution Research consultant to provide feedback on their experience with the technique used by their DES consultant. Individual participant interviews were held at the DES office. Interview duration was between 15-20 minutes. 13 participants volunteered to provide feedback to Evolution Research.</td>
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</table>
**MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEW TRAINING**

This project targeted thirty DES consultants who had an existing case load of job seekers to be trained in Motivational Interviewing. The recruitment of DES consultants to undertake the MI training was conducted as an expression of interest from DES providers in the Sydney area. There were no pre-requisite qualifications or level of experience required to be nominated to attend the MI training. Eight services provided consultants to participate in the MI project.

All thirty nominated consultants attended the training as required. However, the DES consultants’ application of MI and completion of the project requirements was not implemented broadly. Of the thirty consultants who completed the MI training only 14 provided feedback to Evolution Research regarding the project by either attending a focus group or providing client data. Seven consultants advised the research team of their inability to complete the project requirements identifying a range of reasons including: resignation, change of role within the organisation and being too busy to follow through. Nine consultants failed to have any further communication with the research team post training.

**TRAINING STRATEGY**

Evolution Research engaged Doctor Kate Russell, a registered MI facilitator, to conduct the Motivational Interview training. Dr Russell is very experienced in the delivery of MI training in a range of settings. Evolution Research worked with Dr Russell to provide the context and identified the aim of the project. The utilisation of a specialist MI training consultant ensured the most up-to-date theories were implemented.

The training was conducted over two full days in Sydney, New South Wales. The program selected explored MI in detail, providing practical techniques to resolve ambivalence and explore barriers or issues that participants may be facing. Day 1 aimed to develop further understandings and begin an exploration of the use of MI techniques. Day 2 focussed on enhancing MI skills and strategies in the employment service context. The format included formal presentations and practical workshop activities with opportunities for discussion. The delivery of the training was interactive with individuals practicing techniques within the sessions.

The training included the latest advancements from the third edition of Miller and Rollnick’s (2013) *Motivational Interviewing*. These advancements reinforce that MI is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication designed to strengthen personal motivation for, and commitment to change. The focus is on a person-centred, guided method for evoking change talk and enhancing intrinsic motivation. It is a model to describe how people change certain health-related behaviours (such as stopping smoking or starting physical activity) and examines an individual’s own fears and difficulties in order to resolve the issue.

**IDENTIFICATION OF DES PARTICIPANTS**

DES consultants were asked to identify potential clients who they thought would benefit from a change in approach. It was anticipated that there would be a wide variation in the individual situation of each client in relation to their employment journey, mental health and disability. DES participants involved in the project were selectively sampled by their DES consultant to ensure as much diversity as possible.

DES consultants provided Evolution Research with de-identified information on up to five of their existing participants. A relatively low number of DES participants volunteered to meet with the project team. However all volunteering participants were interviewed. A total of fifty participant interview times were allocated across
participating DES providers. A total of thirteen participants attended interviews with an Evolution Research consultant.

A Plain Language Statement as discussed with all participants to inform them of the purpose of the project and the requirements of their involvement.

**DATA COLLECTION/RESULTS**

A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was collected from both DES consultants and participants. A combination of strategies was used including focus groups, pre- and post-MI Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS), individual interviews and EPP reviews.

**SITUATIONAL MOTIVATION SCALE**

The following information describes the application of the SIMS, as described by the developers of the scale.\(^\text{10}\)

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**Situational motivation** refers to the motivation individuals experience when they are currently engaging in an activity – the “here-and-now” of motivation. Situational (or state) motivation, as measured at a given point in time, provides an understanding of a person’s current (or state) self-regulatory processes.

Self-determination theory indicates that different types of motivation underlie human behaviour. These types of motivation are posited to differ in their inherent levels of self-determination. Self-determination involves a true sense of choice, a sense of feeling free in doing what one has chosen to do. Listed on a continuum from high to low levels of self-determination, these motivations are intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. *Intrinsically motivated* behaviours are those that are engaged in for their own sake – that is, for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from performing them.

On the other hand, *extrinsic motivation* refers to a wide variety of behaviours where the goals of action extend beyond those inherent in the activity itself. Different types of extrinsic motivations have been proposed by self-determination theory that can also be ordered along the self-determination continuum. From lower to higher levels of self-determination, these are external and identified regulations.

*External regulation* occurs when behaviour is regulated by rewards or in order to avoid negative consequences. That is, regardless of whether the goal of behaviour is to obtain rewards or to avoid sanctions, the individual experiences an obligation to behave in a specific way. In contrast, *identified regulation* occurs when a particular behaviour is valued, and perceived as being chosen by oneself. Yet, the motivation is still extrinsic because the activity is not performed for itself but as a means to an end.

Besides intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, a third motivational concept has been identified to fully understand human behaviour, namely, *amotivation*. When amotivated, individuals experience a lack of contingency between their behaviours and outcomes. Their behaviours are neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated. Amotivated behaviours are the least self-determined because there is no sense of purpose and no expectations of reward or possibility of changing the course of events. Amotivation can thus be seen as similar to learned helplessness where the individual experiences feelings of incompetence and expectancies of uncontrollability.

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According to self-determination theory, these four types of motivation are differently related to various types of outcomes. Indeed, because these motivations differ in their inherent levels of self-determination and that self-determination has been hypothesised to be associated with enhanced psychological functioning, one would expect intrinsic motivation to be mostly associated with positive outcomes (e.g. persistence) followed by identified regulation. In contrast, the most negative outcomes (e.g. depressive states) will stem from amotivation followed by external regulation. These findings have been obtained with several outcomes.

Self-determination theory also analyses the effects of social factors in terms of their meaning for a person’s feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. That is, a social context that offers people the possibility to satisfy their basic needs will lead to self-determined types of motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation and identified regulation) whereas events that thwart these needs will produce non–self-determined types of motivation (i.e., external regulation and amotivation). For instance, some studies have shown that negative feedback is associated with a decrease in perceptions of competence and intrinsic motivation. Moreover, a vast number of studies have shown that providing choice (i.e., autonomy support) is associated with feelings of autonomy and self-determined types of motivation.

DES consultants were asked to administer the SIMS prior to using MI techniques with their participants, as well as post implementation of MI.

**FOCUS GROUPS**

Two focus groups were held to seek feedback from DES consultants regarding the MI training (relevance, effectiveness etc.), implementation of MI strategies with their clients, observed outcomes arising from use of MI strategies with clients, barriers or issues experienced in relation to implementing MI strategies, and perceptions regarding the potential usefulness of continued use of MI strategies with DES participants, including with different disability groups. Discussions also considered the DES consultant’s satisfaction with the application of MI in development of EPPs, and any advantages or disadvantages to this approach compared to non-MI practices. The focus group question guide is attached as an appendix to this report.

Feedback from focus groups is discussed in Section 4 of this report.

**FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS**

Individual face-to-face interviews were held with all DES participants who agreed to participate in discussion as part of the project. An interview question guide was developed by Evolution Research to ensure general consistency of questioning by each Evolution Research consultant. The participant interview question guide is attached as an appendix to this report.

Fifty interview times were made available for face to face interviews with participants. Only thirteen participants elected to participate and attend face-to-face interviews with Evolution Research. Individual face-to-face interviews were held with all DES participants who agreed to be part of the project.

**CASE STUDIES**

Selected examples of the implementation and results of the Motivational Interview approach are used to demonstrate the real life benefits of the application of MI in the employment setting. These examples highlight the potential usefulness and immediate impact that using MI techniques can have in particular situations.
Case studies are included in Section 5 of this report.
4 FINDINGS

DES CONSULTANT FEEDBACK

TRAINING

The MI training was approached by many of the DES consultants with apprehension and early resistance. Many consultants initially had difficulty relating the theory of MI to the practical application of MI in their role as an employment consultant in the early stages of the training. They also felt that they would not be able to implement MI strategies with participants due to the time constraints imposed by their employer and the pressure to meet KPI's.

However, with the linking of theoretical information with the practical application of MI, consultants started to develop a greater understanding of MI. On completion of the training many DES consultants reported a shift in attitude towards the training and identified the potential of MI to be a very useful approach in their role as a DES consultant. The following feedback relating to the training was presented.

- Some consultants struggled with the training being broken up into separate theory and practical components;
- The training could have been more tailored to the role of the DES consultant – more DES employment scenarios on the first day of the training rather than primarily on the second day;
- Language/terminology used in the training needed to be DES specific to make the training more meaningful and easier to follow;
- One consultant stated that they were sceptical at the beginning of training but when the trainer started expanding on the benefits and showed the video of it being used, they realised it would be useful – they also found that applying it to themselves in training was a useful way of learning.

Consultants believe that the following modifications would increase the impact of MI training for employment consultants.

- A reduction in the length of the training with relevant examples and application. Potentially a one-day course targeting MI strategies as they relate to DES consultants would be great, avoiding MI theory;
- Facilitator needs to have good background knowledge of the industry to tailor the MI activities;
- Follow-up training would help to clarify and reinforce the techniques so that they can be used effectively.

A number of consultants believe that a wider roll out MI training would be beneficial to all employment consultants’ in both DES and Job Service Australia. Consultants believed that:

- MI training would help in overcoming significant gaps in current training that is available to DES staff – webinars have too heavy a focus on policy and there is no training on how to interact with clients; if there was more training available staff would stay in the job longer as they would feel more comfortable and confident in what they are doing; current “training” is really in-house and relying on colleagues (which can be problematic if experienced staff are “jaded” and have a hard, non-understanding approach to clients);
Making videos relevant to employment services and have these available for new staff would be good (e.g. initial interview, EPP session).

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Of the thirty consultants who attended training only thirteen attended the follow up focus groups. The high attrition rate of participating consultants is not surprising due to the significant turn-over in DES consultants within the industry, the auditing activities that were being undertaken by the department at some of the participating DES at the time of the project and the time constraints indicated by DES consultants to manage their workload.

Nevertheless, the feedback provided by consultants who participated fully in the project reported some significantly positive changes in their interactions with participants – particularly in relation to participant motivation and identification of steps towards achieving positive outcomes.

**Consultant comments**

The following DES consultant comments relating to the implementation of MI were provided:

- I was the biggest critic of MI after the training, but I gave it a go with two clients. I've seen remarkable improvement and progressive improvement with these clients;
- It's easy to implement once you have your head around it;
- It has been difficult to see any change with most clients – we really need a six month period to implement it – it's a solution-focused therapy but time-wise there hasn't been enough time to implement it properly with clients – most of my clients have only had one session using MI – it's also difficult to see change as many clients that I would use it with have gone onto suspension;
- I already approach clients in the “MI spirit” but each time I used a specific technique from the training I got positive results;
- I struggled with implementing and using the language initially – it's really fast paced so I really had to think about what I was going to say – as I got used to it, it was good;
- I found it useful with the pausing and listening – the pause often prompted the client to keep talking so I got more information;
- I found it easier to apply with new clients rather than those I already had a longer-term relationship with – MI strategies help build a relationship with new clients;
- It can be hard to change your ways when you've worked in the industry for a long time, so it required effort – in more time it will happen better, but I feel it needs follow-up training to reinforce it to me;
- It would be great to have MI training at the point of induction (when first employed by a DES) so you know how to work with clients, and to then have occasional refreshers to remind you;
- I've been able to implement a lot of the strategies taught at the training – it has been great and I've been in the industry a long time;
- I have realised you don't have to spend an hour with the client each time you use MI – you can use techniques with them in 10 minutes to help them;
There have been awkward moments with some clients – for one client it became a negative outcome as he focused on all the negatives (using pros and cons) and as MI allowed him to be very honest he told me that he didn’t want his mental health discussed at all and he just wanted to focus on work;

MI discussion required thought but it’s becoming more natural and flowing as time goes on – discussion flows but I need to refresh myself on tools before I’ve used them;

To speak to a challenging client needs you to change your own mindset about them in order to effectively use the strategies – MI helps with this;

Appointments with clients are a lot longer at the start because they talk a lot more, but you have a lot more information to work with which helps in the long run;

Techniques used in MI are very easy and very useful. The key to the techniques is knowing which one suits your participant best;

I will continue to use MI but feel I will need a refresher in three to six months to continue to develop my tools.

Benefits of MI

DES Consultants identified a range of success and benefits of using MI in a very short period of time. Many consultants only had one or two interactions with their participants during the designated four weeks of the project. The benefits identified by the consultants are significant given this time frame.

Many consultants indicated that MI provided them with tools and the confidence to engage more openly with participants. In many cases the consultants reported that they found themselves interacting with their participant in a totally different way. Consultants felt that participants were engaging more in conversations and becoming more active in decision making. Comments from consultants included.

- After using MI techniques, I put the onus back on the participant to increase our meeting frequency if they wanted and he chose to increase to weekly rather than fortnightly;
- It’s a good way to identify the real reasons behind apparent resistance;
- MI encourages more listening skills from the consultant;
- I found out things about clients I otherwise wouldn’t have which assists to move them forward;
- I used it with a client with social phobia – client usually gives very short answers but with the MI techniques he opened up a lot more (30-40 minute appointment compared to the usual 10-15 minute appointments);
- Using MI technique of reflecting is assisting my own style as I normally talk a lot and the client does not get an opportunity to say much;
- Listening and hearing what a job-seeker wants long-term will go a long way to job retention – it empowers and encourages;
- Impact on clients:
  - More talking from clients
  - More trust from clients
o More involved in the process
o Helps clients take ownership
o More nurtured
o Helps clients to see that some sort of change is possible and this helps us get results.

During the training the consultants indicated that limited time would be a barrier to successfully implementing MI techniques for their participants. Following the application of MI, consultants have now identified the value that MI can have in reducing the amount of time needed to achieve outcomes for their participants. Consultants identified that MI assisted them to form a foundation on which to develop goals, and a strategy to achieve these, and that this approach had not previously been attempted within their organisations. Consultants reported that:

- MI uses language that helps to find out underlying reasons for barriers/resistance;
- MI assists to develop a deeper understanding of your client which then helps to fit them in to a job better:
  o Although we feel as if we don’t have time, using MI is useful for clients who are not going anywhere, so you waste more time in not using MI with these clients
  o Using MI definitely saves time in the long run
  o It’s another piece in the jig-saw of helping clients – it’s successful – otherwise you have people coming from a place of compliance, rather than taking ownership and helping you get to know them;
- MI helps to explore client values (e.g. why they want to change) – values exploration is very effective and can really help to re-motivate by discovering personal values;
- By the third appointment using MI I found I could have clients job seeking and in a way that is effective to them - the impact on time therefore isn’t as great as some claim as it gets clients into sustainable job-seeking relatively quickly.

Consultants indicated that using MI strategies had a positive impact on goal setting and future planning. Therefore, MI has the potential to have a direct impact on the content of participants EPP. Consultants overwhelmingly agreed that using a MI approach made appointments more targeted and productive. The ability to expose and assist their participant to address any underpinning barriers or resistance allows the consultant to develop short, medium and long term employment goals. Feedback from consultants included:

- I used MI techniques consistently with a few clients – I have noticed a change in attitude and that they are more engaged in the process; specifically, I became more aware of their barriers and what they need to work on to enable them to return to work (used MI technique of agenda setting to identify barriers);
- MI approach provides clients more time to talk and results in more inclusive planning;
- I now plan more with my clients, rather than telling them what I feel they should do – it has helped my clients but also helped bring me back to listening.
Benefits of MI for consultants

The MI training has proven particularly beneficial to both new and experienced DES consultants. The majority of consultants commented on the limited DES specific training that is available to them. Existing training within the DES environment was reported to have a greater focus on policies, reporting and KPI’s rather than how to carry out the role of a DES consultant. The following comments highlighted an unintended benefit of the MI project:

- I was very sceptical as I’m already very experienced in the DES industry, however I found myself using MI techniques without realising at times – it has got me using my softer side again instead of how the job has hardened me;
- It was very encouraging to be told we can spend time listening to our clients rather than just being told to focus only on employment;
- We currently get no training in how to speak to clients with a disability when we first start – having MI training provides knowledge about how to speak to people (not just how to do EPPs etc.) – if we had this when we first started the job, consultants would be very effective (particularly as many new staff have no disability experience);
- It brought me back to before my “hard wall” and allowed me to spend time talking to the client and listening to them (whereas DES management want us to look straight at employment).

A significant benefit to consultants has been the introduction of the range of MI related strategies that they have utilised with participants. MI provides a range of strategies which can be used and presented visually to assist the participant in gaining insight into their current position and identifying barriers that may not have surfaced or been addressed. Consultants reported that these tools have increased their effectiveness. Consultants reported the following:

- The activities made clients focus more rather than just the “give me a job now” mentality;
- The MI techniques that use visual methods are effective. It has a greater impact on the client as they can see it in black and white;
- Using the importance scale with a client regarding work and earning money turned them to a position where they were now work ready and happy for us to use reverse marketing – this was a total change in attitude for the client and after having been job-seeking for a long time with no success, she is now starting a job next week.

Consultants clearly identified that using MI techniques in the DES setting would correlate to more appropriate employment outcomes for their participants and would result in a greater level of job retention. Having a greater insight and understanding of participants is key to being able to identify an appropriate job match. Comments from consultants included:

- To get clients into a job that they will remain in into the longer-term, we need to use MI techniques;
- MI can be a quicker avenue to employment for some clients – it is likely to lead to better job retention as you are better addressing their barriers;
- MI can also be used with employers to better understand their needs.
Early outcomes of MI

Throughout the focus groups consultants provided examples of the success they had experienced by implementing MI techniques. Common feedback highlighted the ability that MI had in having a direct impact in a limited amount of time and with very little MI experience. Examples of early outcomes of MI implementation were described by consultants as follows:

- **Employment outcome** (consultant attributes this to use of MI) – the participant has been unemployed two years but the consultant could not understand why (he has worked with her for approximately two months) – the consultant used MI in his conversation with her and identified a barrier of child care that had not previously been disclosed to other consultants, but that had been preventing her being successful at interview – MI discussion helped come up with ideas of how to overcome the childcare barriers and she is starting full-time work now.

- **Client not moving forward** – the participant always blamed consultants and was not taking medications – the consultant used an MI approach and strategies which resulted in gaining a lot more information from him than he had been able to previously – this resulted in the participant becoming anxious and as a result he agreed to a referral to the DES Health Services Officer – following this he admitted himself to hospital for mental health treatment. The consultant feels that the reason for achievement of this “outcome” was due to self-realisation for the participant (let him talk) and spending more time than usual with him at his appointment. The participant had previously felt that he was never given the time to talk (as consultants report that they generally don’t have the time to give to talk and find out what is going on) The MI strategies used included rephrasing and reflection with the participant. The consultant considered this a positive outcome as he would be unable to find sustainable employment until his mental health condition is appropriately treated and stabilised.

- **Medical assessment** – the participant presented at his appointment saying he was suicidal and therefore could not work and claimed that “no one ever listens”. The consultant let him talk and acknowledged that he felt he needed to be assessed (medical) prior to agreeing to work. His EPP was re-written to include a short-term goal of being assessed, which he reported appreciating. Following this assessment he is now working.

- **Change in attitude** – using the importance scale with a participant regarding work and earning money turned them to a position where they were now work ready and happy for the consultant to use reverse marketing – this was a total change in attitude for the client and after having been a relatively long-term job seeker, she is commencing a new job.

- **Identifying Sensitive Barriers** – MI provided a useful way for a DES consultant to address a sensitive issue with a participant – she asked him why he does not feel he has been keeping jobs and he stated that it may be because he smells (he sweats a lot at work, has been homeless and therefore has not had access to shower/washing machine and cannot afford deodorant). When the consultant explored the hygiene issues and possible solutions, he said “you can get me soap for the first three weeks of employment as I can’t afford it yet”. The DES is now also helping him to purchase a washing machine.

**DISADVANTAGES/BARRIERS EXPERIENCED WHEN USING MI**

Disadvantages of the implementation of MI identified by consultants related to the consultants’ ability to deal with the conflicting needs of their employer versus the participant. Many consultants feel that the pressure to
meet KPI’s and the size of their current case load does not allow them sufficient time to spend with their participants. In relation to this, and other barriers, consultants reported that:

- The pressure of balancing the MI spirit with the push to get clients into work means we put MI on the bench;
- We’re so time poor that we can’t put in the effort to implement MI;
- KPI pressure means we do not feel we have time to use MI techniques;
- Having MI discussion, which is designed so that we are guiding clients to reach their own decisions, some clients seemed to feel that they came up with the solutions and that I was doing nothing.

**IMPACT ON EPP**

Due to the limited time frame of the project, which limited the time consultants had to implement MI techniques with their participants, a definitive impact of MI on the development and value of the EPP is difficult to quantify. However, feedback from the consultants has indicated that MI has the potential to more effectively inform the consultant about their participant and to result in the development of more meaningful EPPs. Actual examples of changes that did result from MI within the project time frames and which were documented in a revised EPP included:

- Participant identified and agreed that short-term activities of specific training (computer course) and counselling were required to assist them to be job ready;
- Participant had a fear of committing to positions. The consultant and participant have now broken down the goal of employment to include work experience prior to getting a job so that she can test it. The consultant was previously unaware of her fear of committing to positions – this only came out due to MI approach;
- One consultant reported having adjusted several EPPs according to using MI – adding more activities to the plan and more strategies of how they can address issues for longer-term.

Feedback from consultants identified the benefits that they feel can be gained from revising the EPP according to MI discussions and outcomes. These included:

- It makes the EPP a more relevant document – it helps to use it as a tracking device of achieving goals in the process of getting a job and also helps set non-vocational goals for the “non-work ready” participant to get them ready;
- Prior to MI the EPP was not used to its potential – it tended not to have any activities listed, and only focused on work ready outcomes and did not worry about the planning needed to achieve the participant’s goals;
- A better EPP helps to engage the participant more in addressing barriers;

Consultants from one DES provider identified that in having to do EPPs on a monthly basis (as is the requirement by their organisation) there has not been a lot of change to the EPPs that they have written in some time. They stated that the EPP has become meaningless due to having to write it so frequently. Although they indicated that they could see benefit in writing in specific activities and goals linked to MI outcomes, they indicated that the document was not used for this purpose.
BARRIERS IN DES TO FUTURE USE OF MI

Consultants did identify a variety of instances where they felt MI was not suitable for use in the DES setting. These examples often related to the level or type of disability of the participant (e.g. clients with non-medicated mental illness such as schizophrenia, who do not remember what was discussed one appointment to the next; extreme ADHD and clients with limited concentration spans; clients who are extremely resistant to working and do not have a need to change; and clients with paranoia, as the questioning process can be quite intrusive and asking “why” tends to exacerbate their paranoia).

The organisational philosophy of the DES was also identified as a barrier to the use of MI (many instances were provided where management are reportedly too focussed on the end result and not the process). Consultants believe that there needs to be a mutual understanding by DES management of the benefits that can be gained by using MI (as they are reportedly currently unwilling to enable flexibility to apply this approach as they are very driven by gaining employment outcomes as soon as possible). This feedback was reiterated consistently by consultants from a variety of providers.

The following comments reinforce the struggle between service delivery and outcomes.

- DES managers want placements straight away (therefore not wanting us to spend time with clients who need it to address their barriers);
- We are facing the same resistance from our managers to let us implement new and effective techniques which focus on the preparation (the managers need to be involved in the changing);
- Managers focus on pushing people in to work – participants and services need time to evolve with this change;
- Managers are now regularly saying “it’s all about the placements”;
- We have resistance from managers – they don’t understand that spending time with clients up front will help move things along, rather than having them sit in an employment push for so long because you have not got to know or understand the client and their situation, or spent the time to work with them (manager tell us “you’re not a counsellor, just get them a job”);
- We get a lot of “talk” training in our industry, but not training with tools that we can take away and apply – getting practical tools is good;
- We need to be able to spend less time on marketing and get to spending more time with clients (one DES provider is getting consultants to market 4 hours per day every morning, and can only see clients in afternoons).

DES PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Thirteen DES participants agreed to participate in providing feedback for the MI project. Participants were asked to attend a one-on-one interview with a consultant from Evolution Research at their local DES office. No participants failed to attend the interview. Guiding questions for the participant interviews were developed and are included as an appendix to this report. In addition to providing feedback, all participants were asked to complete the SIMS following implementation of MI techniques by their DES consultant.
Almost half of the participants interviewed reported that they have noticed a difference in their interactions with their DES consultant and job seeking. Many comments related to an increase in both the participant’s and consultant’s level of confidence to achieve employment goals. Participant feedback included:

- The interview was more focused on a particular goal – I now feel I can work on my weaknesses with my consultant; the meetings are more structured with an aim, whereas with previous appointments I wouldn’t know what it was going to be about; I feel as if we’re achieving more;
- The consultant has started asking me questions about why I’ve been unemployed and why I’m having issues applying for jobs in job club; she talked me through my problems rather than just saying I’d be fine and dismissing my concerns; it’s very much “what can I do to help you” now;
- The consultant is more confident;
- I now feel looked after and very comfortable – previously I felt very nervous coming in every week;
- I look forward to appointments as I now feel it’s possible they can help me;
- At first I wanted to work but I wasn’t very enthusiastic; now I don’t mind as I can see I will get something out of it.

Many participants also identified a change in the style and direction of interaction with their consultant. The following feedback reflects and describes the participant’s experience of their consultant’s application of MI activities and approach.

- My consultant has been fairly consistent but now she has started bringing a note pad to write things down so it feels like I’m being listened to; it feels like my EPP has been adjusted to what I have said, rather than just continuing with what the consultant wants me to do;
- My consultant is focusing more on me now and not just looking for jobs; this new system has a focus on me, it’s about me – previously it was just about getting a job without helping me to work on my weaknesses. This approach is more effective – it’s about me which is good;
- My consultant has been listening more recently;
- My consultant seems quicker and more efficient than previous consultants. She accepts what I don’t want to do;
- I have seen an increase in my consultant’s confidence. The increase in confidence has made me think I am more likely to get a job soon. My previous DES provider was not doing anything for me. My consultant here has been applying for jobs with me and taking me to interviews. He knows what I need;
- Yes I have seen a change. She is treating me as a person – she seems like she wants to help me get a job and cares about me – this approach has been easy and comfortable, pleasurable, so kind and helpful;
- My consultant has asked me a bit more about my barriers and job goals – that has been very useful as I now have an interview this week for a job I want;
- My appointments are more goal driven now – we’ve been working toward specific goals and I’ve been given sheets to fill out which helps as I forget things; it’s better having goals – this new approach has been good. We have established what has not worked in the past and the impact this may have on
me; we've identified the red flags and how to deal with them so I can address stressors in potential jobs. We now have a very clear job goal and activities – discussions have also opened up new options and this has made me more motivated.

Other participants indicated that they had not identified much change in their consultants approach, however they were satisfied with the service that they had been receiving prior to the project period. Much of the feedback reflected the “MI spirit” such as listening, reflecting and asking more questions.

EMPLOYMENT PATHWAY PLAN

Feedback from participants indicated a mixed understanding about the purpose and content contained within the EPP. The EPP is most commonly perceived as an agreement between the DES and the participant to ensure compliance. Many participants feel that the EPP is a document that ensures that they are meeting their Centrelink requirements, whilst a smaller number of participants indicated that it was a useful goal setting document. The majority of participants interviewed indicated that they have had more input into, and have changed their EPP in the past month and that they have been setting clearer goals.

In cases where the participant had a clear understanding of the purpose of the EPP they reported that the EPP is a useful document to keep them on track with health, study and/or employment. The participant comments below suggest that the DES consultants who have been utilising MI strategies are placing greater onus on the value of constructing a detailed and fluid EPP. Comments included:

- The purpose is to keep me on track with my overall goal; we changed the plan a couple of weeks ago after discussing what I felt I could do. I had found it difficult to manage study whilst also looking for work and now that my consultant has asked about this, we have agreed that I will focus on completing as much study as possible in the next two months and then we will look for a work-experience placement. Seeing this new plan has made me feel more motivated to finish my study and I’m also now more comfortable that my consultant will be with me all the way while I look for work options;
- The EPP helps me manage my health condition and part-time study while also looking for part-time employment; the activities are clear and we have now agreed to review it each month;
- The EPP helps me keep a routine and keeps me active – this is especially helpful as I have agoraphobia and anxiety so I tend to retract. The EPP reminds me of what I have to do and makes me get out and do it – it’s helpful, I’m glad it’s there. We recently rewrote my EPP as my consultant recognised the anxiety I was having – she moved my appointments to fortnightly with phone calls in between, and I am now also doing one-on-one rather than group job seeking (previously I just had weekly group job seeking appointments and no other contacts);
- The EPP tells you about where you want to be in future – it’s a little bit useful – setting a goal and also the steps to getting the goal are useful;
- The EPP gets me and my consultant on the same page and to realise what we’re working towards; it details the steps my consultant is taking and also what I need to do;
- It keeps me accountable with my activities – if I’m not doing what I should then my provider can’t help; it also shows what the provider is responsible for so if they’re not doing what they should I can refer back to it; it lays out different term goals which reminds me to look at both short-term and long-term goals, and not just focus on long-term;
It’s very much based on my goals; my consultant helps me by suggesting things but always bases my EPP on what I want – this is good as I was afraid it would just be what they say I have to do – it’s been a teamwork focus – it can be frustrating with so many small activities on the EPP but now I feel ok in telling my consultant if I’m feeling overwhelmed – he’s not judgemental and he listens.

Participants who took part in this project overwhelmingly reported that their consultant was developing a very good rapport with them and that they are feeling confident that they are being assisted to achieve their goals. Of particular importance to participants is that they are treated as an individual and not jumping through hoops to satisfy the needs of the DES. Rather, they are engaging in activities that are moving towards their employment, educational or health goal.

It is important to participants that their consultant identifies their needs, listens to what they want, is concerned about a positive outcome for them and has time to spend with them.

**IMPACT ON PARTICIPANT MOTIVATION**

The impact of the MI approach appears to have had a significant impact on the participants involved in the project. The majority of participants reported that their interaction with their consultant has had a significant impact on their motivation in the weeks corresponding to the MI implementation period. Participants reported that they feel as though they have more direction, a clearer plan and more confidence in finding the job they want.

Key comments from participants since the introduction of MI include:

- I have more of a plan and am on track as of the meeting a couple of weeks ago – I’m now doing what I want to do, rather than just coming in to do activities that they tell me to do;
- The things we have discussed have made me more confident and I’m aware of the areas that I need to work on and how to do this – we will review my progress each month so that we can keep working on improving things;
- I am more motivated as I am not being put forward for jobs I don’t want to do. I know it is not their fault as there are not many jobs out there;
- I feel confident now; my consultant’s kindness and knowledge is very different to her previous approach – she knows what she’s doing and she cares;
- I have felt a bit more positive and really want to work;
- It’s been nice to have something a bit different and more structured but I still need to be connected to the right services to help me (we started looking at this today);
- I’m more motivated as we have opened up new job goals (however this is also increasing my anxiety which we need to manage); my consultant is “part of my team” (interacts with treating mental health professionals) – the team element comforts me a bit and I feel safe with this; choice and control are important to me and I feel I have these.

**SIMS FEEDBACK**

The relatively small number of SIMS surveys (n=17) completed by clients prior to and following implementation of MI techniques by their DES consultant means that no statistically significant information can be concluded from the results. Whilst general indications may be possible to draw, it is noted that caution should be used
when relying on this information as a valid indicator as to the changes in motivation experienced by clients. In addition, given the short time frame over which DES consultants had to implement the techniques, further caution should be drawn as many DES consultants indicated that they had only worked with clients for one to two sessions using MI techniques and felt that it was too early to draw conclusive insights.

Given the limited statistical reliability of the SIMS data, statistical figures are not presented in this report. General findings are discussed whilst reminding the reader that these are limited indications of the future potential that MI can have on clients’ levels of motivation.

For the current project, a slight increase was observed for the average level of participants’ intrinsic motivation following implementation of MI strategies (change in average score from 17 to 18). In considering clients’ overall levels of extrinsic motivation, a slight increase was observed in the level of identified regulation (average score 23 to 24) and also in external regulation (change in average score 14 to 15). Average levels of amotivation remained the same (average score 9).

To achieve a more reliable indication of the impact of MI however, the current project would benefit from being repeated with a larger sample, and over a longer time frame to examine whether these slight changes are indicative of greater trends that could be observed if DES consultants were afforded a longer implementation period over which to observe sustained behavioural change in clients.
5 Case Studies

Selected examples of the implementation and results of the Motivational Interview approach are used to demonstrate the real life benefits of the application of MI in the employment setting. These examples highlight the potential usefulness and immediate impact that using MI techniques can have in particular situations.

Case Study 1

Participant Experience Prior to Consultant’s MI Training

I was with another DES Provider for two years and it got to the point where they actually told me I had “slipped through the cracks”. I asked them to help me find a suitable course of study and they told me I couldn’t do that and that I just had to look for work. I was required to go in to their office to job seek for two hours each day, and also attend an additional appointment with my consultant each fortnight. This was costing me $50 a fortnight in travel costs and also left me little time to focus on my study. When I raised this with them they just dismissed my problems and didn’t listen.

I transferred to my current provider about five months ago. I was beginning to think that this provider wasn’t going to be any different to my last one as I was still having to come in and attend a job club each week to try to find a job, and my consultant had not asked me about any of the actual difficulties I was experiencing in relation to finding a job.

Participant Experience After Consultant Attended MI Training

A few weeks ago my consultant pulled me aside and said that she had noticed I wasn’t getting very far with my job seeking. She asked me about the issues I was having in applying for different jobs. This was the first time since I had been with them that I had been asked about what I was doing outside of job-seeking and what actual difficulties I was having. We talked through my problems and rather than just dismissing them, my consultant listened to what I was saying and helped to develop a plan that would mean I could focus on my study and also get a job in the area I am studying for.

We rewrote my EPP and it actually felt like my consultant adjusted the plan according to what I had said, rather than just to do what she told me to do. My new EPP helps to keep me on track with my overall goal and I actually feel more motivated to finish my study and look for a job. I feel comfortable and safe in speaking up if I need more help or if my EPP isn’t working.

The conversation my consultant and I had a couple of weeks ago was the turning point. My consultant asked about my difficulties in finding a job, and then re-did my EPP so that I can focus on study for the next two months with the agreement that I will look for work experience (with my consultant’s assistance) and then employment once I have completed the modules I need to in my course. This approach helps to manage my anxieties and mental health impacts as I have been struggling to manage study and job-seeking at the same time. We’ve been able to compromise to make it win-win for both them [the DES] and me.

DES Feedback

This participant’s barriers in relation to returning to employment are due to anxiety and depression. The participant has a compulsory requirement to be with a DES Provider and has been required to attend fortnightly contact appointments and also a weekly job-search session with our service. Although the participant has been
required to attend the job-search sessions at our office, it has been noted that she does not gain more skills from this and that she is already active in undertaking job search at home.

The participant is currently studying a Diploma via distance education with the goal to work for an Aged Care Facility. This goal is considered to be realistic. In order to achieve this qualification she needs to complete a set number of modules and also undertake a period of work experience.

Prior to undertaking the MI training, the focus with this participant was for her to attend job-search groups and to apply for employment positions. However, after implementing MI techniques, it was discovered that she has been having difficulty in applying for positions as she is struggling to cope with completing her study whilst also looking for employment. It also became clear that she does not yet have the confidence to undertake work experience or employment in this area as she needs to complete more course modules to gain a greater understanding of the concepts that she will need to apply in the job role.

After having identified the barriers that have been preventing the participant progressing with job seeking, a new EPP was developed which was based on activities designed to overcome the identified barriers, to enable her to focus on study for a short period of time, and to then support her in finding suitable work experience followed by employment. The participant appears to be much more motivated following these discussions and the re-development of the EPP based on actively overcoming the barriers she described.

The MI techniques used with this participant included: the use of scales to assist her to identify the degree of importance, readiness and confidence she had in relation to completing her course and pursuing her identified job goal; and reflecting on comments made by the participant to highlight the strengths she had mentioned but not realised in relation to herself (i.e. adaptability, which assisted in shifting from a fear focus to a feeling that she can achieve her goal).

In addition to the techniques however, it was noted by the consultant that taking the time to talk to the participant rather than just prescribing activities to do, and using more inclusive planning, contributed significantly to the positive outcomes observed so far.

* Specific course and job goal details have been withheld to maintain anonymity.

**CASE STUDY 2**

**PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO CONSULTANT’S MI TRAINING**

The participant has been registered with the DES provider for approximately one-and-a-half years. He is aged in his early thirties and his reported disability barriers include Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. The frequency of appointments at the DES Provider has consistently been on a fortnightly basis until the time that his DES consultant completed the MI training.

The participant has limited work history. Since registering with the DES Provider early in 2013 he has had “a few odd jobs lasting a few weeks here and there”. These have included work as a Labourer, Store Hand and Kitchen Hand. Prior to registration with the DES Provider, the participant’s main work was in roofing.

The participant reported that he has not enjoyed working with previous DES consultants as each appointment has felt like an interview and he has been required to do activities that he has been told he has to do, rather than activities he actually cares about.
PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE AFTER CONSULTANT ATTENDED MI TRAINING

The participant reported that he now looks forward to his appointments with his DES consultant as she makes the discussions “fun and not like an interview”. He stated that his DES consultant cares about what he wants and does not just focus on what she thinks he should do. He is now feeling more positive and less anxious about completing the activities he needs to in order to prepare for employment, including participating in mock interviews with his consultant. The participant previously resisted undertaking mock interviews with his consultant as he was embarrassed about saying the wrong thing. However, he now feels more prepared for this as his consultant has identified a range of ways that he can reflect on good and bad interview styles to learn effective ways of responding to interview questions.

The participant is also more confident about gaining employment in the future. He reported that he had been focusing on trying to gain employment in roofing again as this is the area in which he has the most experience. His interviews so far have been unsuccessful which has affected his confidence and motivation. Since discussing his reasons for preferring roofing, the participant stated that his DES consultant has actually assisted him to realise that there are other suitable employment options for him to pursue, and that he may just need to get some work experience in these areas to make him feel more confident.

DES FEEDBACK

Prior to using MI techniques with this participant, he appeared quite difficult to communicate with, displayed a lack of motivation towards work and was clearly only participating due to the pressures of his father. The participant lacked direction and indicated that he simply wanted to get a job “because he had to”.

Using MI techniques, the DES consultant reported that she was able to elicit the reasons that the participant wanted to focus on roofing, and found that this was due to it being in his “comfort zone”. He expressed that he likes knowing what is expected of him and how to do a job, and that he enjoys repetitive jobs as this allows him to feel comfortable and confident. Through use of scaling techniques, the DES consultant was able to assist the participant to realise that it was not roofing that he actually enjoyed, but the characteristics of the job that made roofing enjoyable. Through their discussion the participant realised that the elements of the job that he enjoys could actually be transferred to another role, through the building of confidence and training.

The participant has agreed that undertaking work experience before working would be a good way to learn without feeling like he was disappointing anyone, which was another barrier which the DES consultant had been previously unaware of.

The benefits that the DES consultant has reported from the use of MI techniques with this participant include:

- **Participant response to the interview** – the participant has become highly responsive and the MI skills have impacted greatly on the development of the participant and therefore on his progress in relation to DES involvement.

- **Behavioural changes** – the participant is much more engaged and through MI has accepted ownership over his development by identifying the underlying fears and barriers, and identifying his personal motivations rather than only participating at his father’s request to do so.

- **Engagement / motivation** – the DES consultant and participant have been able to identify the participant’s personal motivations and have tailored the appointments to meet the fears identified through MI. Appointments in the immediate term are now designed to assist the participant in interview techniques as through MI it became evident that he was previously not just resisting interview practice due to not wanting to participate, but that he actually feared saying the wrong thing.
and would become anxious. Strategies have been discussed and agreed to assist the participant to learn interview skills and feel more prepared prior to engaging in a mock interview.

- **Presentation of new information** – MI techniques have resulted in greater information being elicited from the participant than during previous interactions. This has resulted in a new employment direction towards a job that the participant describes as a desired career. This has resulted in an increased willingness to recommence interview training and to seek work experience to gain the skills required for a new position.

- **Productivity of appointments** – the participant has become much more engaged and motivated and has voluntarily requested to meet weekly rather than fortnightly so that he can work towards his employment goals faster.

As a result of the above experience, the DES consultant stated that the key benefits that she feels can be gained out of using MI techniques in a DES setting include: ability to assist unmotivated or unrealistic clients to change career direction; identification of key fears which then enables the consultant to assist in the required area; and a greater relationship and cooperation between the consultant and client.

**CASE STUDY 3**

**PARTICIPANT’S EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO CONSULTANT’S MI TRAINING**

The participant has been registered with the DES provider for approximately six months. He is aged in his mid-thirties and his reported disability barrier includes Schizophrenia. The participant’s frequency of appointments at the DES Provider has consistently been held on a fortnightly basis until the time that his DES consultant completed the MI training.

The participant has been unemployed for a period of six years. His previous employment positions included as a Delivery Driver, Cook, and Promotions Assistant. His education background is completion of Year 10, and recent completion of certificates in Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) and Responsible Conduct of Gambling (RCG), and the gaining of a Boat License.

The participant stated that he felt that completing the RSA and RCG qualifications were a “step in the right direction” when he completed them earlier in the year however he has been anxious about progressing into employment since this time.

**PARTICIPANT’S EXPERIENCE AFTER CONSULTANT ATTENDED MI TRAINING**

The participant reported that he and his DES consultant have recently made significant progress in relation to working towards employment. He noted that he has continued to feel quite anxious but that his DES consultant has taken the time to talk through his concerns, and to put them into perspective. He indicated that he is now feeling comfortable about the prospects of employment as his DES consultant has removed some of the pressure he was feeling by aiming to get work experience before then seeking employment.

**DES FEEDBACK**

Prior to use of MI techniques, the participant appeared to have good intentions of working, however was quite difficult to engage when actions were attempted to find employment. For example, he would agree to the DES consultant contacting employers, however when she actually went to call he would become agitated and anxious and change his mind to say he was not ready. The DES consultant believes that this resistance was
due to his mental health barriers and the impact that being unemployed for a significant period of time has had on his confidence.

Using MI techniques of scaling the DES consultant was able to assist the client to reflect on the improvements he has actually made over the last few months in relation to his readiness to gain employment. These techniques assisted the participant to identify that he has made significant progress and that he is keen to work “for independence, expendable income, and freedom”.

Fears of the participant were identified in relation to returning to work due to the length of time that he has been unemployed, and also the impact that his medication will have on his ability to perform in the day time. As a result, a change to his short-term goals was made and agreement was made for his DES consultant to assist him to find work experience in a bar (or similar setting) prior to commencing any job seeking to find his long-term ambition of managing a bar. The process of the participant making this change in direction has been observed over several MI sessions, with small gains made each time and further reflection for reinforcement of benefits being required at the commencement of each session.

The benefits that the DES consultant has identified from the use of MI techniques with this participant are:

- **Participant response to MI interview** – the participant has responded positively to MI. Through MI the participant and DES consultant were able to identify the cause of apparent resistance to contacting employers and to then address this accordingly. A fear of committing and going back to the work force were identified and it was therefore negotiated with the participant that he could undertake work experience as a transition.

- **Behavioural changes** – over a period of three MI sessions, the participant became more responsive and went from being keen to work, to changing his mind when the consultant would pick up the phone to call and employer (becoming anxious and agitated), to then committing to work experience. He remained in the room while the DES consultant called an employer to ask about work experience and he remained very positive about the call and experience.

- **Engagement/motivation** – the participant was fearful of gaining employment however became comfortable once this was acknowledged and an option of using work experience as a transition was negotiated. He was initially attending fortnightly appointments however when given the choice, requested to attend weekly appointments instead.

- **Employment direction** – the participant has moved from a position of being fearful of employers being contacted, to agreeing to work experience. The participant was present during a call to an employer and has remained positive regarding a work experience placement that is due to commence in the near future.

- **Productivity of appointments** – over the course of three appointments, productivity of appointments has increased significantly to the point where marketing of employers became possible and a work experience placement being secured.

As a result of the above experience, the DES consultant stated that the key benefits she feels can be gained out of using MI techniques in a DES setting include that she was able to use MI techniques to reflect with the client on his motivations and fears of gaining employment, and to then appropriately address his fears through an agreed change of goals to something more manageable and less confronting (i.e. added a short-term action of work experience prior to reaching a long-term goal of paid employment).
**CASE STUDY 4**

**PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND PRIOR TO CONSULTANT’S MI TRAINING**

The participant has been registered with the DES provider for just under one year. He is aged in his mid-thirties and has a mental illness and lives with his elderly mother. He regularly attends the office to job search each week. The participant attended the office for his usual job search on the scheduled day. The consultant noticed that he would stare off into thin air or just not appear to be in the room when the consultant was conducting job search with the group. The consultant asked the participant to speak with her on one-on-one.

**IMPACT ON PARTICIPANT AFTER CONSULTANT ATTENDED MI TRAINING**

After using ‘Reflective Listening’ the participant appeared to be in tune with what he was saying to the consultant. The participant indicated that he was unwell and had not been taking his medication to assist him with his mental illness. As a result the participant came to the realisation that his best option was to attend and admit himself to a ‘mental health hospital’ so he could take his medication as prescribed and get better before looking for work as his mental health was also taking a huge toll on his family.

**DES FEEDBACK**

Using MI with my participant not only helped him realise he needed to take the initiative to help himself but also made me realise by taking that extra five minutes to let him talk and reflect it back to him, he was answering his own questions or ‘voices’ as he put it, telling him what he can and cannot do. The impact was immediate and effective. The participant came to terms with what he had to deal with and what he had to do to help himself. As a result he admitted himself to the mental health hospital.

As a result of the above experience, the DES consultant reflected that she had become hard and uncaring over her time as an employment consultant and that the MI training and strategies ignited her empathy and rekindled her enthusiasm to help people. The MI strategy of reflective listening provided the participant with his own solution to his barriers. The DES consultant believes that the participant would have continued to go through the motions of attending job search each week incapable of successfully achieving an employment outcome due to his mental health.
6 DISCUSSION

USEFULNESS, IMPACT AND OBSTACLES OF MI IN DES

It is evident that the training of DES consultants in MI and the subsequent application of MI techniques with participants has highlighted the potential value that this approach can have in empowering DES participants to engage in the labour market. The introduction of MI has had a positive impact on service delivery, participant satisfaction and positive outcomes for participants.

OVERALL USEFULNESS OF MI FOR DES CONSULTANTS

Training in MI and the implementation of MI techniques was widely regarded as a beneficial approach to use with participants. Consultants stated that this approach provided them with the skills and tools to engage with their participants on a more personal level, which resulted in a greater understanding of their current situation. The use of MI techniques by consultants was said to be very effective as it takes a more holistic approach to working with people.

Using MI was a useful approach as it has the ability to discover the complexities of a participant’s situation and provides opportunity for these to be addressed. Consultants indicated that they found this approach very empowering as they felt as though they were achieving something with their participants rather than following procedures prescribed by their DES organisation.

Prior to having the opportunity to apply MI with participants, many consultants were very apprehensive about it due to the pressure of achieving KPI’s and turning over participants. However, after applying the techniques consultants clearly identified the value that setting a foundation and engaging with participants early in their sessions can have in achieving meaningful outcomes in a relatively short period of time. The initial time investment in participants is considered to lead to faster and more likely, more sustainable long term outcomes.

The initial success and case studies described in this report highlights the potential impact that MI can have on a person’s situation in a relatively short period of time. Although not all of the outcomes presented lead to a participant entering the labour market, the change in motivation and willingness to change behaviour were reported to have had a significant impact on the person’s well-being and their likely ability to participate in the community. Early successes within the project included successful employment outcomes, referrals to health service specialists to assist with mental health, identification of clearer training and employment goals and a more accurate assessment on a person’s readiness to work. For many consultants these successes were surprising, unexpected and attributed directly to using MI techniques.

Consultants indicated that much of the success that they experienced was a combination of implementing a MI approach, utilising visual MI tools and simply affording participants a “real service”. Consultants believe that the application of MI is not necessarily suitable for all participants and needs to be used on a case by case basis.

On completion of the MI training, consultants identified the importance of having adequate and suitable training for DES consultants. Many consultants reported that the MI training was the first training they had attended that is targeted towards developing skills and techniques on how to work with participants. Feedback clearly identified a need for training of the nature of MI for all new and existing consultants. Consultants reported that current training with their organisations is focussed on policies, procedures and outcomes, with minimal assistance provided on how to perform the role of an employment consultant.
OVERALL IMPACT OF MI FOR DES PARTICIPANTS

The implementation of MI with participants throughout this project has been very well received and has assisted in developing a more positive experience and significant outcomes for participants in relation to their job seeking and personal wellbeing.

Participants who were interviewed reported that they noticed a difference in the interactions they had with their DES consultant and job seeking during the project period. The most significant changes observed were consistent with a move by the consultant to using an MI approach. Of particular importance to participants was that they felt as though they were being listened to, included in making decisions that impacted on them and the consultant showing a genuine interest in their wellbeing. Participants also found the introduction of the MI visual tools used by their consultant to be very beneficial as it felt as though their consultant was really working with them and assisted with their motivation to achieve their employment goal.

Participants clearly identified that there has been a greater emphasis on setting goals that will help them to gain work that they desire, rather than to be pushed into any job. This has had a positive impact on the participant’s motivation to attend and engage with their consultant. Having an opportunity to discuss and address barriers without judgement has assisted to reduce the anxiety and pressure of getting a job. Participants reported that they feel as though they have more direction, a clearer plan and more confidence in finding the job they want.

Participant feedback reinforced the positive impact that a MI approach can have in a relatively short period of time and believed that this should be used by all consultants. Participants indicated that the use of MI techniques over a longer period can continue to have a motivating and positive effect on a participant’s engagement with the DES.

Although there was only a small number of participants who provided feedback into this project the impact of the MI approach has clearly assisted with the motivation and engagement of DES participants. This reinforces the positive impact that a MI approach can have in a very short period of time. It would be considered fair to assume that the application of MI techniques over a longer period could continue to have a motivating and positive effect on a participant’s engagement with the DES.

SIMS results indicated slight changes in motivation which could be associated with increases to the meaningfulness of activities that participants were engaging in following MI approaches by their consultants. In both pre and post measures the highest driver of motivation appeared to be Identified Regulation which could indicate that participants value their involvement with their DES provider, but that they are not engaged due to the enjoyment of DES involvement in itself but rather due to it being a means to an end. The relatively lower level of Amotivation observed in both pre and post measures could indicate that participants can see a sense of purpose in their involvement with the DES provider, with an expectation that there is a possibility to change their current employment or study situation. Although limited to a relatively small number of participants these results indicate that MI could have definite value in assisting with motivational change. However, given the small sample size and limited time period in which to apply the MI techniques, a longer implementation period over which to observe sustained behavioural change in a greater number of clients is required for a more reliable measure.

OVERALL IMPACT OF MI ON EPP PLANNING

The understanding of the intent and content of the EPP by both DES consultants and DES participants is wide and varied. Some view the EPP as a compliance document that is the basis of indicating to the department that
a participant is complying and undertaking employment related activities, whilst others view and use the EPP as
a true goal setting and activity based document that assists the job seeker through their employment journey.

Notwithstanding this, DES consultants indicated that using MI and spending more time with their participants
could have a definite impact on the information that they included in the EPP. Many consultants indicated that
MI had increased the relevance of the goals included in the EPP. A smaller number of consultants chose to
include the steps and strategies that participants have agreed as being of benefit to engage in to achieve the
goals.

The detail and usefulness of the EPP in many cases appears to be governed by the individual DES
organisations and their understanding of the requirement of the EPP. Further clarification of the expectation
relating to the content of this document would be beneficial to ensure that it is being implemented as intended.

Feedback relating to the relevance of the EPP for participants was mixed and again dependent on their
understanding of the document. In cases where the participant had a clear understanding of the purpose of the
EPP they reported that the EPP is a useful document to keep them on track with their health, study and/or
employment.

Review of current EPPs reflects that in the majority, the content provides a broad overview of the actions
required and does not provide specific detail as to the actual activities they would be undertaking. Clearer
guidelines on the development and intent of an EPP, with utilisation of MI, have the potential to make the EPP a
more relevant document to guide the participant through their employment journey.

**Barriers of Implementing MI in DES**

Initial resistance from DES consultants at the training was experienced in regard to the usefulness of MI in DES
settings due to the time and outcome based pressures they experience. Many consultants were reluctant
participants in the training and had difficulty contextualising the use of MI techniques in their day-to-day
practice.

Prior to the implementation of MI, many consultants believed their organisations to be too focussed on job
outcomes and KPI’s to adopt a MI approach with their participants. Consultants believe that there needs to be
a mutual understanding by DES management of the benefits that can be gained by using MI and noted that
they are currently unwilling to enable flexibility to apply new approaches as they are very driven by gaining
employment outcomes as quickly as possible. This feedback was consistent across different organisations.

Consultants reported that MI should be used by consultants as a tool to draw on as required, noting that it is not
suitable for all participants. Some consultants believed that using MI on participants where it is not warranted
could have a negative impact on the participant, or that it could be an ineffective use of time. Situations where
MI was considered by some consultants to be less suitable included when working with participants who are
already highly motivated with a clear direction; with participants with non-medicated mental illness such as
schizophrenia, who don’t remember what was discussed from one appointment to the next; with participants
with extreme ADHD and participants with limited concentration spans; with participants who are extremely
resistant to working and do not see a need to change (often due to having sufficient financial and housing
support available through family to support their current desired lifestyle); and with clients with paranoia who
may find the techniques too intrusive.
LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT PROJECT

As discussed below, several factors are considered to have limited the findings of the current project and which need to be taken into account when considering the findings. It is recognised however, that the Department considered that the value of the current project would be to provide indicative results only and that it was not expected that statistically reliable information could be gained due to the very limited timeframes available in which to implement the training and motivational interviewing with clients.

The limitations included that many DES providers reported that Departmental audits were being undertaken in their office at the same time as the project’s implementation period, and that this limited the time available to implement the new strategy with their clients as they prepared for the audit. In addition, several DES consultants advised that they had been unable to implement MI with any clients as their office was short-staffed due to absence and staff turnover, resulting in them having to pick up additional client load and responsibility for training new staff. Several consultants also resigned from their organisation during this period.
7 CONCLUSIONS

This project has provided a limited but valuable indication of the potential impact that MI can have on the ability to encourage motivation and commitment to change among job seekers with disability and the potential of MI to lead to improved employment and training outcomes.

Despite the limited timeframes and competing demands which prevented broader application by DES consultants with participants over the project period, the overwhelmingly positive feedback from DES consultants and many participants indicates that the use of MI in casework assists employment consultants to better engage with and empower DES participants to develop an EPP and actively look for work.

Initial evidence suggests that the use of MI can result in effective employment, training and health outcomes for job seekers with disability in a relatively short period of time. In addition, participant feedback indicated that the MI approach generated more appropriate goals, strategies and outcomes based on the person’s individual situation. Participants observed significant changes in the consultant’s style during the project, reporting that they felt more included in the conversation and had greater input into their employment prospects. These changes were observed to result in an increase in the motivation and ownership of the participant’s employment pathway and it is anticipated to increase the likelihood of employment retention.

The findings of the current project support findings of similar international studies which indicate that employment support services often lack components to intervene with individuals demonstrating ambivalence about finding and continuing work. The described potential benefits of using MI in employment settings include that consultants can work with clients to: reduce resistance; help resolve ambivalence about obtaining employment; resolve ambivalence about behavioural barriers to employment; and develop clear, achievable vocational goals.

Although the project faced some initial resistance from the DES consultants due to time and performance pressures they are faced with on a daily basis, there was a definite shift in the perception of the need for training and the benefit that MI training would have for all consultants. In considering the approach to providing MI training in DES settings, international literature indicates that it should take into account a systemic approach, rather than a one-time training. The introduction of such an evidence-based practice requires a change in the culture and practice of the employment service. Some of the key benefits to achieving such a change through implementation of MI training have been identified as: improvements in consultant skills; minimisation of staff burnout; reduction in client resistance; and resolving of ambivalence about work. These perceptions were echoed by DES participants in the current study who felt that subsequent reinforcement of training would be beneficial. A change by organisations to a process-based approach rather than a primarily outcomes driven approach would help facilitate this change.

The success in the application of MI for most did not clearly transfer into the production of more effective EPP’s. Although many DES consultants and participants acknowledge the setting of new goals and strategies to achieve these goals, these were not clearly articulated in the EPP. Exploring the impact that MI can have on EPPs unearthed a significant inconsistency of the role the EPP plays in the employment process as perceived by DES consultants. Whilst some consultants view this document as a useful tool to set goals and strategies to assist the jobseeker, others view the EPP as a compliance document that only contains broad overarching goals.

In conclusion, the feedback and evidence gathered clearly indicates that MI is an effective method of engaging job seekers with disability and a broader application of MI should be encouraged.
8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Evolution Research believes consideration should be given to the implementation of the following recommendations to progress the use of MI or similar strategies throughout the DES sector.

- Undertake wider research into the effectiveness of MI or MI related strategies in the DES sector to validate and reinforce the findings of this project.
- Revise and develop the EPP guidelines to ensure that DES have a clear and consistent understanding of its purpose and potential value to the employment process.
- Develop a strategy that encourages organisations to undertake meaningful training to assist staff to perform their role as employment consultants.
## 9 APPENDICES

### SITUATIONAL MOTIVATION SCALE (SIMS)

**Client Survey**

**Date:** ______________

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale below, please circle the number that best describes the reason why you are currently registered with <<DES Provider name>>.

Answer each item according to the following scale:

- **1:** corresponds not all
- **2:** corresponds a very little
- **3:** corresponds a little
- **4:** corresponds moderately
- **5:** corresponds enough
- **6:** corresponds a lot
- **7:** corresponds exactly

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**Why are you currently registered with <<DES Provider name>>?**

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<td>1. Because I think that this activity is interesting</td>
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<td>2. Because I am doing it for my own good</td>
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<td>3. Because I am supposed to do it</td>
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<td>4. There may be good reasons to do this activity, but personally I don’t see any</td>
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<td>5. Because I think that this activity is pleasant</td>
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<td>6. Because I think that this activity is good for me</td>
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<td>7. Because it is something that I have to do</td>
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<td>8. I do this activity but I am not sure if it is worth it</td>
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<td>9. Because this activity is fun</td>
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<td>10. By personal decision</td>
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<td>11. Because I don’t have any choice</td>
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<td>12. I don’t know; I don’t see what this activity brings me</td>
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<td>13. Because I feel good when doing this activity</td>
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<td>14. Because I believe that this activity is important for me</td>
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<td>15. Because I feel that I have to do it</td>
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<td>16. I do this activity, but I am not sure it is a good thing to pursue it</td>
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**ID:** __________
FOCUS GROUP GUIDING QUESTIONS

Application of MI during current project: We will look at the potential use of MI for future applications later in the focus group, but for now, we are interested in your recent experience in using MI since you completed the training.

- Did you find the MI techniques easy to implement? If yes, in what ways. If no, in what ways?
- How did the clients respond to the interview using MI? (e.g. did they comment on a different style; was the interaction a natural discussion; was the client more forthcoming with information; did the appointment discussion flow and feel productive)
- Were there any significant changes observed as compared to your previous interactions for any particular client/s?
- Did you find that using MI techniques provided you with any new information about your client and their current employment situation?
- Was the client more or less engaged in discussions and decision making using MI as compared to previous interactions?
- For clients you have applied MI techniques with, do you feel they were more involved in the decision making processes involved in developing an EPP, as compared to previous clients who you have not used MI with? If so, do you feel this has had any observable impact on the EPP process or outcomes?
- For clients you have applied MI techniques with, have you noticed an observable change in their motivation (improved or decreased)?
- For clients you have applied MI techniques with, do they seem more committed to finding employment, and/or to the steps involved in finding employment (e.g. training/study, addressing personal barriers/presentation)? (if varies with client, what sort of factors can be identified that may account for some of this variability)?
- Did the use of MI instigate a review in the participant’s current EPP?
- Have you noticed any changes in the way you have worked with your clients in general since undertaking the MI training?
- Thinking about your previous client interactions (i.e. pre-MI training), are there any ways in which your interactions with clients have changed?
- Thinking about your previous client interactions (i.e. pre-MI training), are there any ways in which your employment pathway planning processes have changed?
- Are there any other ways in which you feel use of MI can benefit the development of EPPs?
- Have you incorporated MI techniques into your general client interactions, or are you applying them to specific clients depending on circumstance/need? If specific, what factors lead you to apply MI & how does MI impact these factors? If general, which particular techniques are beneficial & why?
- Were there any issues/barriers you identified in using MI due to particular client characteristics?
Considerations for future application of MI: (some of these points have been discussed in relation to your specific, recent experience in the use of MI, but we now want you to consider the use of MI overall, and in relation to future client applications)

- Did you find the MI techniques easy to implement? If yes, in what ways. If no, in what ways?
- Do you feel the use of MI techniques is beneficial to the participant? Why? In what ways?
- Do you feel the use of MI techniques is beneficial to the consultant? Why? In what ways?
- Does using MI during participant interactions improve the level of engagement and productivity of the interaction? If yes, how? If no, why not?
- Was there a perceived improvement in participants’ level of engagement?
- Was there a perceived improvement in participants’ level of motivation for action?
- Will you continue to use MI techniques with your case load? Why / why not?
CLIENT INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

The DES Provider has been trialling a new approach in the way they help their clients, so I’m interested in feedback from you as to how your consultant has recently been working with you (not more broadly about what the provider can do to help you). Anything you say in this meeting stays between you and I – we won’t be passing any feedback on to your consultant.

1. How long have you been with <DES NAME>?  
   **If long-term with DES – go to Q2**  
   **If new to DES – go to Q8**

2. Has <DES CONSULTANT> been your consultant that whole time?  
   **YES / NO**

3. In the last month, compared to say the last six/twelve months, have you felt any differently about your meetings with <DES NAME>, or any differently about job-seeking?  
   **YES / NO**  
   If yes, how:

4. Have you noticed a difference in the way <DES CONSULTANT> has been working with you over the past month? (or compared to a previous consultant)  
   **YES / NO**  
   If yes, what’s different about it? How have you found the different approach?

5. Can you tell me about your EPP (e.g. what the purpose of it is; what is in it)?

6. Do you feel as if you had a say in what activities are written in your EPP (or the activities you’re agreeing to do) in relation to finding work or study?  
   **YES / NO**  
   (comment)

7. Do you feel as if your consultant needs to do things differently when you meet with them to talk about your employment goals and plans?  
   **YES / NO**  
   If yes, what:

8. So overall, over this last month, as compared to the previous six/twelve months, would you say you have felt about the same about your meetings and job seeking activities, or maybe a bit more motivated or bit less motivated?  
   **SAME / MORE / LESS**

**END OF QUESTIONS FOR LONG-TERM CLIENTS**

9. Have you felt as if your consultant has listened to what you have to say? (e.g. about your employment goals, any assistance you need, any barriers you may be facing in relation to going back to work)  
   **YES / NO**  
   (comment)

10. Can you tell me about your EPP (e.g. what the purpose of it is; what is in it)?

11. Do you feel as if you had a say in what activities are written in your EPP (or the activities you’re agreeing to do) in relation to finding work or study?  
   **YES / NO**  

12. Do you feel as if your consultant needs to do things differently when you meet with them to talk about your employment goals and plans?  
   **YES / NO**  
   If yes, what:

13. After the discussions you have had with your consultant in the last few weeks, compared to when you first started with <DES NAME> would you say you feel about the same about your meetings and job seeking activities, or maybe a bit more motivated or a bit less motivated?  
   **SAME / MORE / LESS**