

## MI Booster Tools for JJ Probation/Parole

### Practice Dialog Example....

Try this one on. Here PO Jane (Joe) is resisting the idea of MI and whether she want to use it. PO SUPERvisor wants to argue that she is wrong (and he is right). Although this course of action may have felt good to the SUPERvisor, it is not MI consistent. Nor would it have benefited PO Jane or the other POs who may have felt likewise. PO Jane's statements are a form of resistance. So, SUPERvisor needs to turn to a more MI consistent way of responding and roll with it. Here is a possibility....

**PO J:** I can see where this MI stuff would be helpful with youth who are highly verbal and not too bad off, but not with the kids we work with. These kids are hardcore delinquents with even more difficult family situations. This is just something about these kids by the time we get them that makes them different. They are antisocial for one. They lie and steal. They'll scam you, if you don't confront them. It just won't work with them."

[pause let that sink in]

**SUPERviser:** It upsets you that I might be suggesting something that could hurt the kids we work with. You really care about them.

**PO J:** Damn right. If I let them scam me, then they aren't going to recover.

**SUPERviser:** They don't benefit from your being naïve.

**PO J:** Rigt. They'll just take advantage of you.

**SUPERviser:** And so sometimes it feels like you really need to get in their face, so they know that you aren't being fooled.

**PO J:** Yeah. I guess. I mean, that's what I know works. You all pay me to do a job and that's what I'm doing.

**SUPERviser:** As best as you know how...

**PO J:** ...with what I know works.

**SUPERviser:** Because you've seen it. Sometimes it works really well.

**PO J:** Yeah

**SUPERviser:** ...but not always...

**PO J:** No. Not always...these kids face some tough problems.

**SUPERviser:** And that's what worries you. You might consider something different, if---and only if---you thought it might work for the kids in your caseload, and that's the spot you're at now.

**PO J:** Exactly. I'm just not sure.

**SUPERviser:** Well, I am not going to try to convince you that this is the right or only way to work with people, but it sounds like you might be open if you thought it could help.

**PO J:** I'll do whatever works.

**SUPERviser:** You're committed to the kids in your caseload and good probation practice. It's just now you need some other kind of data---something other than what I've said---to convince you.

**PO J:** I'd need to see it work in practice. I need to see it work with some of these hardcore kids.

**SUPERviser:** So , you want to reserve judgment until you've tried it and see how it works.

**PO J:** I guess I do need to try it first. I am someone who has to see it firsthand.

**SUPERviser:** I wonder if you decided to give it a try, how you might do it.

**PO J:** I've got a follow-up meeting tonight with a kid who had a dirty UA. I could try it then.

**SUPERviser:** I'd be curious to hear what happens if you do try it. What, specifically, might you do?

**PO J:** I guess instead of arguing about the accuracy of the UA, which is what usually happens, I'd try to understand this guy's view. Maybe he'll tell me what's really going on and or even finally be more open to getting the help we've been trying to give him. I might start with doing more of the reflections and open questions.

**SUPERviser:** You sound pretty clear about your goal and how you'd do it. So, what do you think about tonight?

**PO J:** I'll give it a try. See what happens.

**Group discussion-** How was this MI? Spirit, principles, specific skills?

(Materials adapted from Building Motivational Interviewing Skills: A Practitioner Workbook [2009] by D. Rosengren)