Workshop Title: Motivational Interviewing: Enhancing communication to improve health outcomes.

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a brief, patient-centered, and directive counseling approach that enhances intrinsic motivation to engage and maintain positive behavior change. Research shows that MI is effective in facilitating health-related behavior change across a variety of patient populations. Primary care studies reveal that MI is efficient, and produces better outcomes than traditional medical feedback and advice giving.

More recently, medical schools as well as primary care clinics have begun to adopt MI skills to help clinicians establish productive relationships with their patients. MI focuses on the use of active and empathetic listening to evoke clients’ own reasons, desires, ability, and need for change. Strategic application of these and other MI techniques has been shown to significantly increase readiness to change, while increasing overall engagement and utilization of health-related services among reluctant and/or historically underserved populations.

MI is stage-matched intervention that involves helping individuals who are ambivalent or resistant to change create awareness of discrepancies within the context of their current health behaviors verses desired values and goals. Practitioners using MI can facilitate movement through the stages by recognizing and matching their responses to the readiness level of their patients. For patients who are currently engaging in health-related behavior change, motivational interviewers aid in refining the plans based on patients’ own perceived barriers and abilities to progress toward their health-related goals. Additionally, MI is inherently culturally sensitive, in that practitioners largely avoid giving unwanted advice and ask patients to weigh the pros and cons of behavior change in light of their cultures values and norms.

This interactive workshop will focus on educating health practitioners in the basic tenants of motivational interviewing while demonstrating hands on tips specific to help elicit positive behavior change most relevant to primary care physicians and clinic implementation. Current and potential research applications will be briefly reviewed.