

# O.A.R.S.

## The Basic Skills of Motivational Interviewing

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1. Miller and Rollnick (1991) characterize Motivational Interviewing (MI) as *not a series of techniques* but instead *a way of being with clients*. As such, it is not so much what you do, but how you do it that is important. MI is not a prescriptive approach to working with people. There is no one way that represents MI. However, certain basic skills (micro-skills) are necessary prerequisites for this way of being.
2. O.A.R.S. are the basic skills of MI. They are used throughout an interaction. As such, the worker must have a good working knowledge of these skills to be successful in using MI. However, simply doing these techniques does not represent MI. It is the combination of these skills, in concert with specific timing and elements, that distinguishes the character of MI from other interventions.
3. The acronym O.A.R.S. reflects the following elements
  - Open-ended Questions
  - Affirmations
  - Reflective Listening
  - Summaries
4. Whenever you are "stuck" in an interaction you can fall back on these skills to help yourself and the client move. O.A.R.S. are an integral part of helping clients move ahead in the direction of positive change.

Adapted from Miller & Rollnick, 1993 and David Rosengren.