TEACHING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING IN ENGLISH

Bykonia Oksana,
Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor,
Professor of Foreign Languages,
Penitentiary Academy of Ukraine
(34 Honcha Street, Chernihiv, 14000, Ukraine,
e-mail: oksanabikonya@ukr.net)
ORCID: 0000-0002-8865-8792

The aim of this article is to explore the opportunities and challenges of integrating motivational interviewing (MI) training into teaching English for prison staff and inmates. To this end, the following tasks are addressed: to evaluate the effectiveness of MI-based training in developing practical communication skills, the potential for combining language training with professional development, the role of supervision and feedback in skill formation, and the impact of structured training programmes on staff competence; to investigate possible barriers in the prison context, including organisational constraints, staff turnover, scepticism and cultural characteristics.

Methodology. *To achieve the aim and objectives, qualitative and quantitative analysis methods, case studies, content analysis (review of MI training programmes, workshop materials and fidelity assessment tools to evaluate educational content, usability and effectiveness), and comparative analysis were used to achieve the objectives and address the challenges.*

Scientific novelty. *It employs a multidimensional approach to integrating MI training into the English language learning process in penitentiary institutions. The study combines language training with the development of professional MI skills, providing new insights into effective staff training strategies. The article expands knowledge about the application of MI in specialised educational contexts and creates a basis for further research and practical implementation of such programmes.*

Research results. *The implementation of MI training in combination with English language learning is considered, and the importance of supervision, structured feedback and fidelity assessment for skill development is emphasised. Practical approaches have been identified, including workshops, the train-the-trainer model, and blended learning, which simultaneously improve language competence and professional MI skills. Barriers (organisational constraints, staff turnover, cultural factors) are also described, and strategies for overcoming them are proposed.*

Practical implications. *Integrating MI training with English language learning creates opportunities for dual skill development: improving language*

competence and practical MI skills. Supervision, structured feedback and fidelity assessment are key to ensuring sustainable competence development. Trainers and teachers play a crucial role in motivating learners, offering guidance and resolving complex situations that extend beyond standard training materials. Successful implementation requires organisational support, resource allocation and ongoing professional development.

***Value (originality).** The article presents a comprehensive approach to dual learning of MI and English, identifies effective teaching strategies, and analyses potential barriers in a prison context. The study emphasises the importance of supervision, feedback, and structured assessment for developing sustainable MI competencies while improving learners' language skills.*

***Key words:** motivational interviewing (MI), English language training, training of prison staff, supervision, feedback, outcome, train-the-trainer, skills development, dual learning.*

НАВЧАННЯ МОТИВАЦІЙНОГО ІНТЕРВ'ЮВАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

Биконя Оксана Павлівна,
доктор педагогічних наук, професор,
професор кафедри іноземних мов,
Пенітенціарна академія України
(14000, Україна, м. Чернігів, вул. Гонча, 34,
e-mail: oksanabikonya@ukr.net)
ORCID: 0000-0002-8865-8792

Метою цієї статті є дослідження можливостей та викликів, пов'язаних з інтеграцією навчання мотиваційного інтерв'ювання (MI) у процес викладання англійської мови для пенітенціарних працівників та ув'язнених. З цією метою розглядаються такі завдання: оцінити ефективність навчання на основі MI у розвитку практичних навичок спілкування, потенціал поєднання мовного навчання з професійним розвитком, роль нагляду та зворотного зв'язку у формуванні навичок, а також впливи структурованих програм навчання на компетентність персоналу; дослідити можливі перешкоди в умовах в'язниці, включно з організаційними обмеженнями, плинністю кадрів, скептицизмом та культурними особливостями.

Для досягнення цілей і завдань були використані якісні та кількісні методи аналізу, тематичні дослідження, контент-аналіз (огляд навчальних програм з MI, матеріалів семінарів та інструментів оцінки відповідності для оцінки освітнього контенту, зручності використання та ефективності) та порівняльний аналіз.

Використовується багатовимірний підхід до інтеграції навчання MI в процес вивчення англійської мови в пенітенціарних установах. Дослідження поєднує мовну підготовку з розвитком професійних навичок MI, надаючи нові уявлення про ефективні стратегії навчання персоналу. У статті роз-

глядаються питання стосовно застосування МІ в умовах спеціалізованої освіти та створюється основа для подальших досліджень і практичного впровадження відповідних програм.

Висвітлено впровадження навчання МІ в поєднанні з вивченням англійської мови та підкреслюється важливість нагляду, структурованого зворотного зв'язку та об'єктивного оцінювання результатів для розвитку навичок. Визначено практичні підходи, включно із семінарами, модель підготовки викладачів і змішане навчання, які одночасно покращують мовні та професійні навички МІ. Також описано перешкоди (організаційні обмеження, плинність кадрів, культурні фактори) та запропоновано стратегії їх подолання.

Інтеграція навчання МІ з навчанням англійської мови створює можливості для розвитку подвійних навичок: поліпшення рівня володіння мовою та практичних навичок МІ. Нагляд, структурований зворотний зв'язок та перевірка достовірності результатів навчання є ключовими факторами для забезпечення сталого розвитку іншомовної компетентності. Тренери й викладачі відіграють вирішальну роль у мотивації слухачів, надаючи їм рекомендації та розв'язання складних ситуацій, що виходять за межі стандартних навчальних матеріалів. Успішна реалізація вимагає організаційної підтримки, розподілу ресурсів та постійного професійного розвитку.

Цінність (оригінальність). У статті представлено комплексний підхід до подвійного навчання МІ та англійської мови, визначено ефективні стратегії викладання та проаналізовано потенційні перешкоди в умовах в'язниці. У дослідженні підкреслено важливість нагляду, зворотного зв'язку та структурованої перевірки для розвитку стійких компетентностей МІ при одночасному вдосконаленні мовних навичок учнів.

Ключові слова: мотиваційне інтерв'ювання (МІ), навчання англійської мови, навчання персоналу в'язниць, нагляд, зворотний зв'язок, результат, навчання тренерів, розвиток навичок, подвійне навчання.

Relevance of article. The relevance of this work lies in the growing need to implement modern, communicative approaches in the training of prison staff. Motivational interviewing (MI) is an evidence-based method designed to support positive behavioural change, increase intrinsic motivation, and foster a responsible attitude towards one's own decisions and actions.

Motivational interviewing (MI) is an evidence-based, client-centred approach to counselling that aims to strengthen internal motivation for change. Initially developed in the field of addiction treatment, MI is now widely used in medicine, psychology, social work, education and organisational development. The expansion of the method's areas of application necessitates high-quality training for specialists.

In a prison environment, where staff work with individuals at high risk of recidivism, with low motivation to change and complex life histories, mastering this approach is extremely important.

Prison staffs often encounter resistance, ambivalence and mistrust on the part of prisoners. Therefore, traditional directive or purely administrative models of interaction often prove ineffective. Motivational interviewing offers an alternative, humanistic and empathetic strategy that allows for more constructive relationships, reduces conflict and promotes rehabilitation processes.

Training prison staff in MI skills increases their professional competence, promotes effective behavioural communication and helps to achieve important goals such as: increasing prisoners' motivation to participate in correctional programmes; reducing the risk of recidivism by promoting more responsible behaviour; developing more trusting, less confrontational relationships between staff and prisoners; strengthening the resocialisation potential of the prison system.

Thus, this study is relevant because it highlights the need for professional training of prison staff in motivational interviewing as a tool for effective communication, psychological support and promoting positive behavioural change. Its provisions can be used to develop educational programmes, training modules and practical recommendations for staff who work under challenging conditions and perform an important social function.

Analysis of significant research and publications. Studies on the implementation of MI in correctional facilities answer two main questions: (1) can staff who are not specialised therapists master MI to a sufficient level, and (2) does the use of MI in a prison environment lead to fundamental changes in behaviour/outcomes (e.g., reduction in substance use or recidivism). The general conclusion of the current literature is that a one-time workshop provides knowledge, but further supervision, feedback, and fidelity assessment are necessary for sustained mastery [2].

Forsberg et al. (2011) conducted a randomised controlled trial (RCT) entitled "Motivational Interviewing delivered by existing prison staff", in which existing prison staff were trained to conduct

MI sessions with prisoners; the effect on substance use after release was assessed. The methodology included staff training and interventions, measurement of baseline and post-treatment indicators, and the use of fidelity assessments (MITI or other codes) for some sessions. The main conclusions were that MI, performed by existing staff, can be integrated into their work; however, the results in terms of reducing use and relapse were moderate and depended on the staff's level of proficiency in MI techniques. The interpretation of the work included the importance of training quality and post-training support [6].

Randomised controlled educational studies in "real-world settings" (L. Forsberg, D. Ernst, C. Å. Farbring, P. C. Amrhein, W. R. Miller, C. E. Yahne, M. Palmer, L. Fulcher) have shown that several studies, including randomised trials in the Swedish prison system, have demonstrated that without systematic feedback and practice, staff often do not reach the threshold of "initial competence" in MI, despite undergoing training. It highlights the need for built-in supervision mechanisms and fidelity coding [1; 6–7].

The researches on the implementation of probation services and correctional models (New Zealand experience, probation) were conducted, including national / regional training programmes for probation officers (two-day workshops and follow-up practice), as well as an assessment of implementation and skill retention. Initial workshops increase understanding of MI, but without regular reinforcement and practice, the skill is lost; the role of internal trainers (capacity building) is also important [4; 15].

The research on training in juvenile justice and correctional education involves large training programmes (e.g., comparing external MINT experts with internal trainers) with a large number of participants (hundreds to thousands). Qualified internal trainers, trained according to the "train-the-trainer" model, can effectively scale training; however, standardisation of supervision and quality control is necessary [3].

A. Norman, U. Lundberg, C. A. Farbring, H. Källmén, and L. Forsberg (2020) and Ch. Tomlin, Ju. Cummins, J. England, S. Mullen, A. Fletcher and E. Hurt (2025) are examples of projects that describe the development of training programmes for prisons,

the use of interactive films / manuals, local trainers and formal fidelity assessments [18; 25]. More recent studies (2024–2025) focus on measuring "non-compatible adherence" and demonstrate that targeted training can reduce such forms of interaction; however, overall competence increases gradually and requires boosters.

The aim of the article is to analyse scientific research and practical models for training prison staff in motivational interviewing, and to identify practical approaches to staff training that can enhance their work with prisoners.

Methodology. The methodological basis of the article uses a comprehensive approach that includes: analysis and synthesis of scientific sources, primarily modern publications on motivational interviewing and staff training in the penitentiary sphere, in particular the results of randomised studies, systematic reviews and practical training models; about the comparative-analytical method, a comparison of different training formats (workshops, supervision, the 'train-the-trainer' model, fidelity assessment) was carried out to identify the most effective approaches; About structural-functional analysis, the functions and components of training programmes necessary for the formation of sustainable motivational interviewing skills among prison staff. Finally, regarding the generalisation of practical experience, empirical data from international prison systems were used to formulate recommendations for implementing MI in the professional activities of staff.

The **scientific novelty** of the article lies in the systematic analysis of contemporary research on training prison staff to conduct motivational interviews, taking into account key challenges (limited resources, staff turnover) and proposing effective training strategies, including workshops, supervision, fidelity assessment and the train-the-trainer model. The article identifies the main factors for success and obstacles to the implementation of MI, provides practical recommendations for developing sustainable staff skills, and emphasises the importance of objective competence assessment (MITI and other standardised tools), contributing to the development of training methodology and improving the effectiveness of resocialisation practices.

Research results. Analysis of scientific research and practical training programmes has shown that *workshops and basic training courses* increase staff knowledge and understanding of MI principles, but this is not sufficient to develop practical competence.

The results of the study confirm that training prison staff in motivational interviewing (MI) is effective when a comprehensive approach is used, combining theoretical lessons, practical exercises, supervision and objective assessment of competence [10; 19; 22]. Basic workshops increase knowledge and awareness, but without regular reinforcement and monitoring, practical skills quickly decline.

Basic workshops are the starting phase of training prison staff in MI methods. They provide fundamental knowledge about MI principles, conversation structure, motivation support techniques, and practical training for interacting with prisoners. The main goal of the workshops is to familiarise staff with the concept of MI and to develop basic practical skills that will be reinforced in further training and supervision (Table 1).

Features of introductory workshops in a prison environment include adapting to the institution's context, taking into account limited resources, the specifics of interaction with convicts, security, and internal rules. Mini-groups should be 8–12 participants per trainer to ensure effective feedback and engagement. The combined format consists of lectures, demonstrations, and role-playing exercises, allowing theory to be combined with practical application. Laying the foundations for further supervision means that training does not complete the learning process; instead, it prepares participants to develop their skills in real-life situations.

Table 1 – Main characteristics of basic workshops

Training component	Description	Goal / outcome	Duration
Theoretical part	Presentation of MI principles (duh MI, empathy, supporting change, avoiding confrontation)	Introduction to the basics of MI, developing an understanding of the *spirit* of MI	2–3 hours

Demonstration of techniques	Video or live demonstrations of real MI sessions	Showing the practical application of techniques: open questions, reflection, change talk	1–2 hours
Practical part: exercises (role-playing)	Simulating consultations with prisoners, working in pairs or groups	Practising basic techniques in a safe environment, developing communication skills	3–4 hours
Feedback	Discussion of exercises with the trainer and colleagues, analysis of video recordings	Awareness of strengths and weaknesses, correction of behavioural strategies	1–2 hours
Introduction to supervision	Familiarisation with further stages of training: supervision, fidelity assessment (MITI), booster sessions	Preparation for systematic skill development and competence support	30–60 minutes
Reflection and summary	Discussion of personal experiences, difficulties, questions	Increasing participant motivation, consolidating acquired knowledge	30 minutes

Supervision and feedback using standard tools (MITI) help build lasting skills, ensure compliance with MI methodology, and boost staff confidence in working with prisoners. The train-the-trainer model has proven effective in scaling training; however, successful implementation requires a quality control system and regular updates to trainer competencies. Regular supervision and individual feedback, especially using fidelity coding (MITI), significantly improve MI skills and help maintain them over time.

The methodology of supervision and feedback in basic MI training programmes for prison staff is based on evidence-based research and systematic reviews, which show that combined approaches – training, supervision, fidelity assessment – ensure sustainable skill formation.

Moyers et al. (2016, 2017) do research and updates to MITI 4.x, which define standardised methods for assessing MI competence and the role of feedback in improving skills [17].

Hurlocker et al. (2020) make a systematic review of MI fidelity assessment tools, which showed that regular coding and supervision improve staff skills [9].

Forsberg et al. (2011) study a randomised study in correctional facilities where MI staff training combined with supervision and feedback influenced the effectiveness of working with prisoners [7].

Owens et al. (2017) show an assessment of the psychometric properties of MITI in practical samples, confirming the effectiveness of coding for objective skill monitoring and feedback planning [20].

Starks et al. (2021) research update of MITI, recommendations for integrating supervision into training to ensure sustainable development of MI skills [24].

Løchting et al. (2021) describe structured supervision and fidelity monitoring in MI programmes for social workers in a prison setting [11].

The main tasks of supervision and feedback are determined as:

1. Monitoring compliance with MI principles and evaluating the quality of sessions conducted.

2. Identifying participants' strengths and weaknesses in the practical application of techniques.

3. Providing brief, constructive advice to improve communication with prisoners.

4. Supporting staff motivation and confidence in using MI in their daily work.

Supervision and feedback are crucial elements in the practical training of prison staff in motivational interviewing (MI) techniques. They enable participants to consolidate the knowledge gained in introductory workshops, enhance their practical skills, identify errors in the application of techniques, and promote the development of sustainable skills.

Table 2 – Components of supervision and feedback

Component	Description	Implementation method	Frequency / Duration	Expected outcome
Supervision of the session	Presence of a trainer or senior mentor during the MI session	Direct observation or video recording	1–2 sessions per participant per month	Identification of errors, monitoring compliance with MI principles
Individual feedback	Constructive analysis of the session	Review of video or audio recordings of the session, discussion of actions	After each control session	Improvement of practical skills, development of self-reflection
Group supervision	Discussion of practical cases, exchange of experience between participants	Workshops, online meetings	Once every 2–4 weeks	Dissemination of best practices, joint resolution of complex situations
Competence assessment (fidelity)	Use of standard tools (MITI) to assess MI quality	Session coding, statistical analysis of indicators	Quarterly or after a certain number of sessions	Objective assessment of MI proficiency, curriculum adjustment
Booster sessions	Short refresher training sessions to reinforce skills	Practical exercises, role-playing games	1–2 times per quarter	Maintaining sustained competence, reducing skill attrition
Reflection and self-assessment	Awareness of one's own progress and difficulties	Diaries, self-assessment, discussions with a mentor	Continuously throughout the supervision period	Increased responsibility and self-control of participants

The specifics of supervision and feedback in a prison environment: 1) a safe environment for discussing mistakes: staff should feel that mistakes are part of learning; 2) regularity and consistency: short, frequent sessions are more effective than one-off long analyses; 3) integration of technology: use of video/audio recordings for detailed analysis and feedback; 4) combination of individual and group approaches: allows for simultaneous development of personal competence and exchange of experience.

The *train-the-trainer model* allows for scaling up training in large institutions, but requires standardisation of methods and quality control.

The train-the-trainer model involves training a group of key employees or mentors who then train other employees of the institution. This approach allows for scaling up training, ensures consistency in the training process, standardisation of methods and quality assurance (fidelity) [12; 14; 16; 21–22].

The *main principles* of the model are:

1. *Selection of trainers.* Employees with a high level of competence and motivation to train others are selected.

2. *Intensive training of trainers.* Trainers undergo an in-depth course on MI, including practical sessions, supervision, and fidelity assessment.

3. *Knowledge transfer.* Trained trainers conduct training sessions for colleagues using standardised methods and materials.

4. *Support and supervision.* Trainers receive regular feedback from senior mentors or external experts.

5. *Quality control.* Use of fidelity assessment tools (MITI) to evaluate the effectiveness of training and the competence of participants.

The main barriers to implementing MI in the prison environment include limited resources, high staff turnover and organisational constraints [5; 8; 13; 23]. These ones can be overcome by integrating structured support programmes, booster sessions and systematic competence monitoring.

1. Organisational barriers. Limited resources: a lack of time for training, as well as a lack of funding for trainers and supervision. High staff turnover: new employees often do not complete the full course,

which reduces the programme's effectiveness. Lack of management support: without strategic support, MI is not effectively integrated into the institution's daily processes.

2. Personal and psychological barriers. Staff scepticism: some employees consider MI to be "unnecessary" or "ineffective" in a prison environment. Resistance to change: staff are accustomed to working in a directive manner and struggle to adapt to an empathetic and motivational style.

3. Competence barriers. Insufficient practical skills: introductory workshops increase knowledge but do not build lasting competence. Lack of supervision and feedback: without support and fidelity assessment, staff quickly revert to old behaviour patterns.

4. Contextual and cultural barriers. Security and regulatory restrictions: specific MI techniques are difficult to apply due to institutional rules. Cultural communication characteristics can reduce the effectiveness of MI.

The practical effect of MI implementation is manifested in improved communication between staff and prisoners, increased motivation of the latter to participate in correctional and resocialisation programmes, and a potential reduction in the risk of recidivism.

Thus, the research results emphasise that successful training of prison staff in MI requires a comprehensive approach that combines theoretical training, practice, supervision and objective competence assessment.

Conclusions and further research perspectives. The analysis showed that training sessions, workshops, and the train-the-trainer model effectively increase staff knowledge of motivational interviewing (MI) principles. However, knowledge alone is not sufficient to develop practical competence. Supervision, structured feedback and fidelity assessment (e.g. MITI) are necessary for sustainable skill development. Several barriers, including organisational constraints, staff turnover, a lack of management support, staff scepticism, and cultural characteristics, hinder the implementation of MI in prisons. Systematically overcoming these obstacles through supervision, booster sessions, and

standardised assessment can significantly improve the effectiveness and sustainability of MI practice in correctional facilities. In the future, we intend to develop training courses for students learning English, using materials from motivational interviewing (MI). These courses will combine English language learning with the practical application of MI principles, enabling students to enhance both their language skills and professional abilities simultaneously.

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