MI Strategy: Listen & Engage in Reflections

Engaging in reflections, or reflective listening, is an important strategy for building empathy with the client/patient. This strategy involves listening carefully to gain insight and understanding of their nature. Miller (2004) defines the essence of a good reflective listening response, as "a statement that makes a guess about the meaning of what the person has said and helps the person continue on in exploring that meaning." (p.13)

Reflections:

- ❖ Are statements rather than questions
- ❖ Make a guess about the client's meaning (rather than asking)
- ❖ Yield more information and better understanding
- ❖ Often a question can be turned into a reflection
- ❖ Helps the client/patient continue exploring
- ❖ In general, a reflection should not be longer than the patient/client's statement

A Reflection is a Statement:

- ❖ **Question:** *"Do you mean that you're wondering if it's possible for you to cut down?"*
- ❖ **Reflection:** *"You're wondering if it's possible for you to cut down."*

A Reflection makes a guess about the person's meaning:

A reflection can be made in the form of a repetition, rephrase, or paraphrase. A repetition is the simplest level and involves repeating a part of the person's statement. Rephrasing is the next level of reflection and involves substituting key words with synonyms. Lastly, the paraphrase is the more complex reflection and makes a guess as to what might be the next statement that follows based on what the person has said.

Client: "I'm not sure why I'm here."

- ❖ **Repetition:** "You're not sure why you're here."
- ❖ **Rephrase:** "You're wondering why you're here."
- ❖ **Paraphrase:** "You're wondering if it was a good idea to come here."
- ❖ **Paraphrase:** "Being here makes you nervous."

Testing a good Reflection: If the person continues with the line of exploration, going a little further or deeper to explain his or her meaning, the reflection was good. If the person stops, changes the subject, or backs away from what was previously said, it may not have been a good reflection.