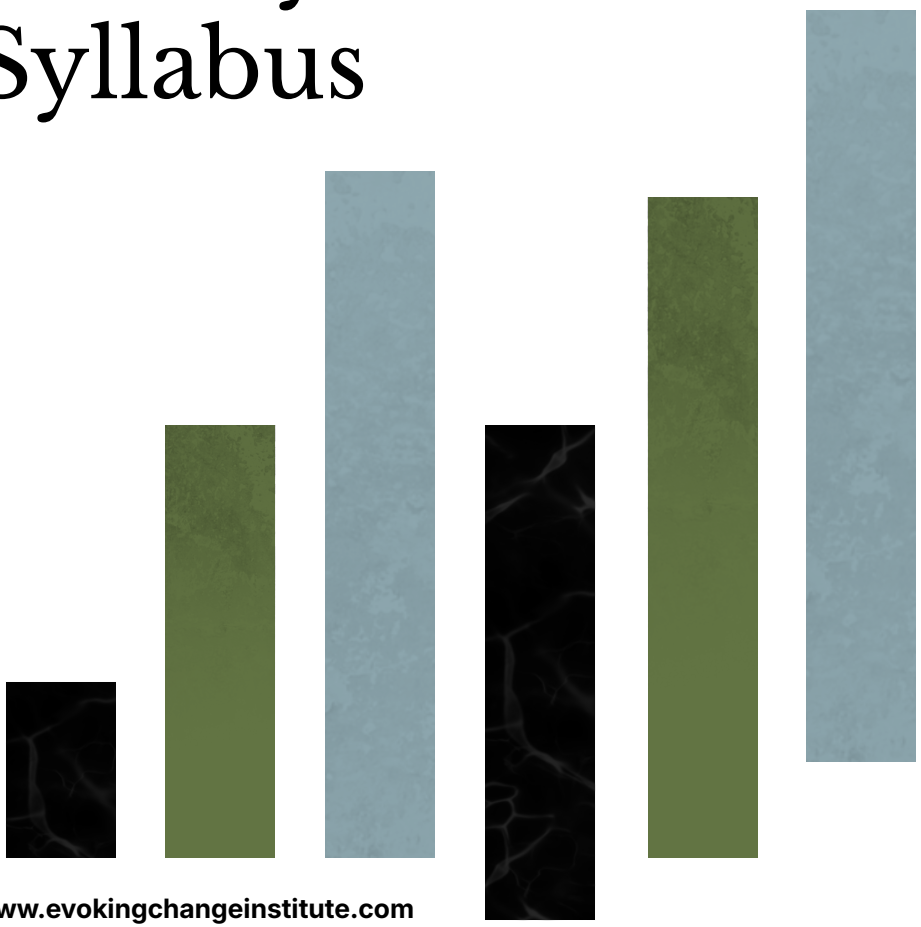
EvokingChange Institute

The Change Conversation

90-Day Pilot Syllabus



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The Change Conversation
90-Day Pilot

Motivational Interviewing & Stages of Change Implementation for One Priority Process

For: K–12 schools, community colleges, universities, and career/technical programs

Duration: 90 days, including a 2-hour Intro session, two design sessions, two skills labs, and basic follow-up

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Program Description

The Change Conversation 90-Day Pilot is a focused implementation project designed to help one campus or department apply Motivational Interviewing (MI) and the Stages of Change to a single, high-impact process—such as academic probation meetings, stop-out outreach, chronic absenteeism response, or advising conversations about staying enrolled.

Rather than trying to change everything at once, the pilot zooms in on one workflow. A small team learns core MI concepts, redesigns their process step-by-step, and tests MI-aligned conversations with real students over 90 days. The result: staff gain practical, context-specific MI skills and your campus gains a concrete, documented workflow you can keep using and adapt elsewhere.

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of the 90-day pilot, participants will be able to:

- Describe MI spirit and basic OARS skills (open questions, affirmations, reflections, summaries) and apply them in their specific process (probation, outreach, advising, etc.).
- Identify student language and behavior that reflects Stages of Change and adjust their responses accordingly instead of pushing for action too soon.
- Use simple MI-consistent strategies to elicit and respond to change talk, and to soften resistance/sustain talk in real student conversations.
- Collaboratively design and use an MI-aligned workflow for one campus process, including stage-check prompts and conversation swaps.
- Track a small set of basic indicators (for example, show/no-show, follow-through, staff confidence) and describe what changed during the pilot.

Who is This For?

This pilot is designed for school professionals who are directly involved in one priority process you want to improve.

Examples:

- Advisors and counselors handling academic warning/probation
- Attendance or engagement teams responding to chronic absenteeism
- Retention or re-enrollment staff doing stop-out outreach
- Student success coaches or case managers for specific programs

Ideal group size: 6–12 pilot team members whose day-to-day work touches the target process.

Prior MI experience: Helpful but not required; the pilot includes an Intro session to build shared language.

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Program Structure at a Glance

The pilot unfolds in four steps over approximately 90 days:

1. On-Ramp: 2-Hour Intro to MI & Stages of Change
2. Design: Two 90-Minute Workflow Design Sessions
3. Practice: Two 60-Minute Skills Labs Using Real Cases
4. Apply & Review: Use New Workflow + Simple Debrief

Step 1: On-Ramp – Change Conversation Intro (2 Hours)

Before redesigning the process, the pilot team participates in a 2-hour live Intro workshop (or confirms prior completion).

Focus:

- MI spirit (partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation) and recognizing the "righting reflex" in your current conversations.
- OARS skills in school language, using examples drawn from your target process.
- Stages of Change with K–12, college, and adult learner examples.
- A handful of conversation swaps for common "stuck" interactions in your chosen area.

Purpose: Create a shared foundation so design and practice time can focus on application rather than theory.

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Step 2: Design – Two 90-Minute Workflow Design Sessions

A small pilot team meets twice (90 minutes each) to map and redesign the target process.

Design Session 1 – Map the Current Process

Objectives:

- Describe the existing workflow for the target process (for example, how probation meetings are scheduled, led, and followed up).
- Identify pain points where staff feel stuck or students disengage (no-shows, "I don't care," early withdrawal).
- Mark key conversation touchpoints where MI could make a difference.

Activities:

- Current-state process map (step diagram or swim lanes).
- Group discussion of typical student responses and staff scripts at each step.

Design Session 2 – Build the MI-Aligned Workflow

Objectives:

- Draft a new, MI-aligned workflow for the target process, step-by-step.
- Include a short stage-check prompt and 2–3 script options at key points.
- Identify 3–5 simple metrics you can realistically track during the pilot.

Activities:

- "Old script vs. MI-aligned script" work for high-stakes moments (for example, opening a probation meeting, responding to ambivalence, closing with a plan).
- Drafting a one-page workflow diagram and a brief stage-check tool tailored to this process.

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Step 3: Practice – Two 60-Minute Skills Labs

Once the pilot workflow is drafted, the team practices using it with real cases.

Skills Lab 1 – OARS and Stage-Matching in Your Process

Objectives:

- Practice open questions and reflections that fit your process and student population.
- Use stage-matched responses for pre-contemplation ("I don't see the problem"), contemplation ("I know I should, but…"), and preparation/activation.

Activities:

- Paired role-plays using real student scenarios from your campus.
- "Two versions of the same conversation" demos: fixing vs. MI-aligned.

Skills Lab 2 – Change Talk, Resistance, and Planning

Objectives:

- Recognize change talk vs. sustain talk in conversations from your target process.
- Try MI-consistent responses to resistance: rolling with, reframing, emphasizing autonomy.
- Guide toward next steps that match the student's stage of change.

Activities:

- Short "DARN hunt" exercises using sample or anonymized transcripts from your own context.
- Practice giving and receiving brief feedback using a simple MI observation/self-reflection tool.

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Step 4: Apply & Review – 90-Day Pilot Period

Over the remaining weeks, the pilot team uses the new workflow in real conversations, keeping the focus narrow and practical.

During the 90 days, pilot staff will:

- Use the MI-aligned workflow and conversation swaps in their actual meetings, calls, or outreach.
- Note student responses, their own comfort level, and any barriers to using MI.
- Collect a small set of agreed-upon indicators (for example, number of contacts made, show/no-show, short staff confidence ratings, student follow-through on agreed next steps).

Closing Debrief (optional 60–90 minutes):

- Review what changed (stories + basic data).
- Identify which parts of the workflow to keep, tweak, or drop.
- Decide whether to extend the pilot, adapt it to another process, or move into a larger-scale training (for example, the 5-Day Institute).

Pilot Playbook Deliverable

By the end of the pilot, your team will receive a concise pilot playbook you can keep using and adapting:

- 1–2 page workflow diagram for the chosen process.
- Short stage-check script (1–3 questions).
- 3–5 conversation swaps (old lines vs. MI-aligned lines).
- List of 3–5 simple metrics and a brief summary of what you saw in the pilot.

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Logistics & Participant Expectations

Format & timing:

- 2-hour Intro workshop (Zoom or in-person).
- Two 90-minute virtual design sessions.
- Two 60-minute virtual skills labs.
- 90-day application period with light data collection.

Participant expectations:

- Attend the Intro session and all design/lab sessions.
- Bring real student cases and examples from your target process.
- Try the new workflow and scripts in actual conversations during the 90 days.
- Participate in simple reflection or data-gathering (for example, quick check-ins or short forms).

Materials provided:

- Slide handouts from the Intro session.
- MI Cheat Sheet for Educators and Stages of Change Quick Guide.
- Conversation Swap examples tailored to your chosen process.
- Pilot playbook template and simple observation/self-reflection tool.

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About the Facilitator

Hart Thorson specializes in helping K–12 schools, colleges, and career programs use Motivational Interviewing and the Stages of Change to improve attendance, engagement, and retention. Training design is informed by MINT (Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers) resources and adapted specifically for education settings where conversations about behavior, academics, and persistence are central to student success.

Hart has also spent nearly 15 years working in schools, managing staff, training admissions, writing curriculum, and teaching. The conversations throughout this training have been experienced firsthand by Hart, and he is proud to share this way of speaking with students, parents, and colleagues to achieve better outcomes across all areas.

Questions or Ready to Schedule?

For more information about bringing The Change Conversation to your campus, or to discuss pricing and scheduling options:

Email: hart@evokingchangeinstitute.com
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We'll talk through your context, confirm fit, and outline what a 5-day training and 90-day pilot could look like for your school.

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