Since CABHR was founded in 1991, its scientists have been at the forefront of the effort to use motivational interviewing to treat alcoholism and substance use disorders.

Motivational interviewing (or MI) is a client-centered, directive counseling style that helps clients think about and resolve their ambivalence about changing difficult behaviors. This approach puts the client “in the driver’s seat when it comes to verbalizing reasons for change,” says Lisa Berger, Ph.D., CABHR scientist and assistant professor of social work at UW–Milwaukee. The motivation to stop drinking or using drugs must come from the client. The counselor does not confront a client, or persuade him to stop, but instead listens carefully and guides him toward readiness for change.

The “Dance” of MI
Any time a client expresses concern about her habit, or mentions a desire to change, the counselor uses reflection techniques to gently raise her awareness. “If someone talks about the crummy stuff that happened because of their drinking, you’d say, ‘It sounds to me like you’re exploring what the impact has been for you,’” explains Virginia Stoffel, Ph.D., CABHR scientist and associate professor of occupational therapy at UW–Milwaukee. The therapist’s goal is to help the client see the discrepancy between where she is now and where she wants to be, without making her feel pressured to change. This delicate balancing act isn’t easy for a therapist, Dr. Stoffel concedes. She compares MI to a dance. “It’s fairly challenging to do well,” she says, “but when it’s done well, it looks easy.”

MI differs from other approaches because it deals directly with ambivalence. “People are going to feel two ways about change: They want to, and they don’t want to,” Dr. Berger says. “In motivational interviewing, ambivalence is viewed as normal and expected.” This prevents clients from seeing mixed feelings as a barrier to changing.

CABHR’s Connection to MI
The work with MI began with CABHR’s founding director, Allen Zweben, D.S.W., who used MI in his clinical practice. He was invited in 1989 to help William Miller, Ph.D., cofounder of MI, develop a short-term treatment protocol that featured the principles of motivational interviewing. Known as Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET), the protocol involves four sessions, a client assessment, and a feedback report so the client can compare his drinking to national averages, all designed to help the client decide to seek treatment. The creation of MET, which was first used in the federal Project MATCH, sparked a surge of interest in MI. MET has since been used in numerous clinical trials. It can be combined with other interventions, used as a recruitment strategy, and also applied to aftercare.

Since then, MI has always had an important place in CABHR research. For example, the Women in Jails project, conducted by CABHR scientists Susan Rose, Ph.D., and Audrey Begun, Ph.D., both social work professors at UW–Milwaukee, currently offers MET to women with alcohol and other drug problems who are incarcerated in Milwaukee areas jails, in the hope that they’ll seek treatment after release. In a separate study, Dr. Berger is examining the effect of a combination of medication and brief MI-based counseling on patients in a family medicine setting. CABHR scientist Todd Campbell, Ph.D., associate professor of counseling and educational psychology at Marquette University, is studying the effect of a supportive significant other on clients receiving MET for alcohol use disorders. And in the HEART to HEART study, CABHR scientist Laura Otto-Salaj, Ph.D., assistant professor of social work at UW–Milwaukee, is using MI techniques for HIV risk reduction.

The Literature: Does MI Work?
Research reveals that motivational interviewing is consistently effective in treating alcohol and substance use disorders. A methodological analysis of clinical trials studying treatment methods, conducted by William Miller and Paula L. Wilbourne and published in Addiction in 2002, found that “motivational enhancement” (a category that includes MI) had the second highest level of evidence among 46 modalities.

A 2005 meta-analysis of studies testing the effectiveness of MI, published in the Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, found that...
The word “university” is derived from the word “universe” which means “the whole.” While disciplinary specialization is necessary, it should not occur without cross fertilization. This is the synergy that makes the whole more than the sum of its parts.

Some argue, for example, that a primary focus on one or two areas, say engineering or public health, will provide keys to growth for UW–Milwaukee. We should fund the best ideas in these disciplines, and then benefits will follow for UW–Milwaukee, the city of Milwaukee, and the rest of Wisconsin. Good ideas, however, are not automatically useful. How are good ideas and state-of-the-art technology successfully adopted?

To understand what has been called the “knowledge adoption” process, we must understand social and cultural factors, including people, organizations, institutions, and social structures. For example, software developers need to talk to social scientists if they want to figure out how to get people to use their software. The Challenger explosion is a classic example of the disastrous consequences paid when interdisciplinary dialogue does not occur. Ironically, it took a physicist, Richard Feynman, to point out that while the immediate cause of the explosion was the failure of technology (the o-rings), the underlying cause was organizational failure. Even the best technology cannot avert catastrophe if organizations are ill-equipped to understand and communicate its use. The flip side of this is that social scientists are beginning to get a handle on complex social processes and relationships partly as a result of analytic tools such as “point process models” developed by ecologists and geographers. In the addictions field, these cutting-edge models have been applied in the study of the impact of emotional states on the urge to smoke.

Like UW–Milwaukee, CABHR draws its strength from researchers with diverse interests and expertise. The best ideas result from conversations that cross disciplinary, departmental, college, and university boundaries. CABHR’s expansive vision is in evidence in the diversity of topics and researcher backgrounds presented in the pages of this newsletter. This range was also demonstrated at a retreat we held for our scientists and staff last August. The scientists gave progress reports on their current research, including an intervention for HIV risk behavior, the developmental course of Williams syndrome, sexual risk behavior among men who have sex with men, screening for addictions among women in jail, the epidemiology of hazardous drinking in Milwaukee, methamphetamine use among Native Americans in Wisconsin, pharmacological interventions for alcohol dependence, and an intervention for college drinkers. CABHR scientists study how substance abuse and mental health problems are distributed across society, how to measure them, what causes them, what makes them worse, and how to intervene to reduce them. CABHR is not just another academic silo; it includes collaborators from colleges across UW–Milwaukee, as well as from other academic institutions and treatment provider organizations in Milwaukee, the United States, and the rest of the world.

CABHR researchers are reaching across departmental boundaries and applying innovative statistical approaches to understand major urban problems. Consider, for example, the work of CABHR scientist Mike Brondino, our lead methodologist. In an effort to understand the phenomenon of sexually transmitted diseases in Milwaukee (which holds census tracts with some of the country’s highest STD rates), Mike and post-doctoral fellow Andrew Muriuki recently began working with Mike Greenwald, professor of urban planning at UW–Milwaukee, and with the Milwaukee Black Health Coalition, to adapt point process modeling techniques. This collaborative team is studying the spatial distribution and temporal changes in factors associated with the transmission of STDs. By talking to scholars in other disciplines and taking advantage of the diversity of scientific resources offered at the university, CABHR scientists build knowledge about and offer solutions to complex, seemingly intractable social problems.

WHAT IS CABHR?
Based in UW–Milwaukee’s Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, CABHR is a research center led by core academic scientists with broad interest in the addictions and behavioral health. CABHR conducts cutting-edge epidemiological, intervention, and clinical research. Its scientists currently hold $1.5 million in research grants.
NEWS BRIEFS

Silberman Award Aids Research on Alcohol Recovery
CABHR scientists Audrey Begun, Ph.D., Mike Brondino, Ph.D., and Lisa Berger, Ph.D., received a Silberman Fund Faculty Grant to study a new way to assess alcohol recovery. Called the LifeCourse Timeline Followback (LCTLFB), this tool identifies a person’s efforts to stop drinking, including formal treatment and informal and self-change attempts.

The scientists are testing the LCTLFB on local participants in Project COMBINE, a national, multi-site study launched in 2001 that examined the effectiveness of different combinations of behavioral treatments and medication to treat alcoholism. CABHR was the Milwaukee site of Project COMBINE.

Director to Study Meth Use Among Native American Youth
CABHR Director Michael Fendrich, Ph.D., received a National Institute on Drug Abuse grant to conduct an epidemiological study of methamphetamine abuse among Native American youth in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Dr. Fendrich will conduct secondary analysis of data from school-based student surveys. The grant was awarded through the Great Lakes Native American Research Center on Health, which is led by CABHR scientist John Dellingen, Ph.D., professor in the College of Health Sciences at UW–Milwaukee.

Researchers Deliver Fromkin Lecture
CABHR scientists Audrey Begun, Ph.D., and Susan J. Rose, Ph.D., delivered the 38th Fromkin Memorial Lecture on October 18 at UW–Milwaukee. Their presentation was titled “Three Strikes: Substance Abusing, Female, and In Jail.”

The lecture built on the scientists’ ongoing research on the effectiveness of alcohol and drug intervention among women in Milwaukee-area jails. Dr. Rose and Dr. Begun presented their preliminary findings at the Monash University “What Works with Drug Intervention Among Women in Milwaukee-area Jails” conference, held in Prato, Italy in September.

Stoffel Writes Mental Health Text
CABHR scientist Virginia Stoffel, Ph.D., is currently writing Occupational Therapy in Mental Health: A Vision for Participation with coauthor Catana Brown, Ph.D., of Touro University Nevada. The book, to be published by F.A. Davis Company, covers topics including recovery, clubhouses, and motivation.

Kanter Hosts Stigma Conference
CABHR scientist Jonathan Kanter, Ph.D., received a grant from the Charles E. Kubly Foundation to continue research on effective programs to reduce the stigma of depression. The funding also allowed Dr. Kanter to host a conference on this topic at UW–Milwaukee in October. The event brought together national experts in stigma research, as well as local leaders in stigma reduction and mental health advocacy in the community.

CABHR Shapes Alcohol Curriculum
The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) has contracted CABHR scientist Lisa Berger, Ph.D., to write a module on alcohol and the workplace, to be added to the NIAAA curriculum on alcohol disorders for master’s level social work students. Sheila Akabas, Ph.D., of Columbia University will coauthor. CABHR scientist Audrey Begun, Ph.D., is curriculum editor. The curriculum is available free of charge at http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/social/main.html.

Mersky Studies Child Safety
CABHR scientist Joshua Mersky, Ph.D., assistant professor of social work at UW–Milwaukee, received a grant from the Administration for Children, Youth and Families to study the effectiveness of the Western Wisconsin Collaborative for Children’s Safety and Permanency. This new alliance of state, county, and tribal partners is committed to responding to the safety and permanency needs of children whose parents or caregivers abuse drugs.

Lippert Presents Alcohol Results
CABHR assistant researcher Adam Lippert received the Samuel B. Guze Young Scholar Award to attend the Guze Symposium on Alcoholism at Washington University in St. Louis in February 2007. He presented a poster titled “Comparing Hazardous Drinkers to Dependent Drinkers: Results from the Greater Milwaukee Study.”

CABHR Scientists Publish Research
The following journals have accepted articles by CABHR scientists this year: American Journal of Preventive Medicine • Behavior Analyst • Cognitive Therapy and Research • International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory and Practice • Journal of the American Medical Directors Association • Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics • Journal of Psychopathology and Behavior Assessment • Journal of Sex Research • Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions • Psychological Record • Violence and Victims • Wisconsin Medical Journal. For details on these articles, see www.cabhr.uwm.edu.HELPING PEOPLE CHANGE

Continued from page 1

motivational interviewing produces “robust and enduring effects” when it is practiced at the beginning of treatment. The analysis also showed that MI increases treatment retention and adherence. This may occur because MI is a nonconfrontational technique; a previous study revealed that confrontation is associated with high dropout rates.

As motivational interviewing has grown more popular, researchers have applied it to an increasingly wide variety of behaviors, including smoking cessation, weight loss, exercise, diabetes care, and even the use of fluoridated water.

The Future of MI at CABHR

The popularity of MI means that more trainers are now teaching the approach. But research suggests that improved training methods are needed to ensure that the method is taught and used correctly. To understand how people best learn motivational interviewing, Drs. Berger, Stoffel, and Otto-Salaj recently provided MI training to Wisconsin case managers who work with serious mental illness and substance use disorders. The researchers assessed the participants to understand how well they learned the technique, and are now analyzing the results and writing about the project. Dr. Berger also attended an advanced teacher-training seminar on motivational interviewing in Sofia, Bulgaria in September, and plans to apply what she learned to her work with social work graduate students.

The ultimate goal of CABHR scientists is to ensure that more counselors have the confidence and preparation to enter the “dance” of motivational interviewing. (For more on the research mentioned above, visit www.cabhr.uwm.edu.)

FUNDING SOURCES

CABHR currently receives funding for multiple research projects from the following sources:

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
National Institute on Drug Abuse
Bureau of Justice Assistance
The Lois and Samuel Silberman Fund
Forest Labs
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Great Lakes Inter–Tribal Council, Inc.
MEET OUR CORE SCIENTISTS

Michael Fendrich, Ph.D.
Director of CABHR • Professor of social work, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Studies the epidemiology of substance abuse, measurement and assessment of risk factors, and consequences of substance abuse in the community • Has received grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute of Justice • Served on the faculty of the University of Illinois–Chicago for 14 years before joining CABHR.

Audrey Begun, Ph.D.
Professor of social work, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Studies family development as well as preventive strategies, particularly for adolescent substance abuse and intimate partner violence • Co-developed the Safe At Home instrument, which assesses batterers’ readiness to change, and the Lifecourse Timeline Followback measure of alcohol change attempts • Editor of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism’s Social Work Education Curriculum on Alcohol Use Disorders.

Lisa Berger, Ph.D.
Assistant professor of social work, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Before joining the UW–Milwaukee faculty, spent seven years on the CABHR staff in roles including research program manager • Research interests include the workplace and employee alcohol abuse, the recruitment and retention of participants in intervention studies, and factors involved in long-term recovery from alcohol dependence • Currently testing a new measure of change attempts from alcoholism, supported by a Silberman Fund grant.

Michael Brondino, Ph.D.
Assistant professor of social work, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Provides methodological and statistical support to CABHR researchers • Interests include test development, item readability, intervention improvement, mental health services, HIV/STD prevention, and alcohol and drug prevention programs • Works as a methodological consultant and grant investigator for the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, among others.

Todd Campbell, Ph.D.
Associate professor and chair, department of counseling and educational psychology, Marquette University • Executive director, 7Cs Community Counseling Clinic, a partnership between Marquette and the Guest House of Milwaukee, a shelter for homeless men • Licensed psychologist • Interests include addictive behaviors and coexisting mental health issues, brief therapies, systems theories, treatment matching, program evaluation, treatment outcomes, and counseling training.

Jonathan Kanter, Ph.D.
Assistant professor of psychology, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Directs the Depression Treatment Specialty Clinic • Coordinates the UW–Milwaukee Psychology Clinic • Focuses broadly on the psychopathology and treatment of depression using behavioral or behavior analytic models • Currently studies stigmatizing attitudes about depression, mechanisms of action in psychotherapy for depression, behavioral activation, and functional analytic psychotherapy.

Laura Otto-Salaj, Ph.D.
Assistant professor of social work, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Studies the intersection of alcohol and other substance use with HIV sexual risk behaviors, particularly for at-risk women • Currently principal investigator for HEART to HEART, a National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism study that examines the efficacy of an HIV-risk reduction intervention combined with alcohol treatment • Conducted HIV behavioral research at the Medical College of Wisconsin for eight years.

Susan Rose, Ph.D.
Associate professor of social work, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Directs the Child Welfare Training Program with Steve L. McMurtry, Ph.D. • Studies child neglect, the use of rapid-assessment measures in practice, and alcohol and other drug abuse treatment • Shares the role of principal investigator with Audrey Begun, Ph.D., on the Supporting Jails in Providing Drug Abuse Services for Women project • Has extensive experience in community mental health and family-based service delivery systems in child welfare.

Virginia Stoffel, Ph.D.
Associate professor of occupational therapy, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee • Board certified in mental health by the American Occupational Therapy Association • Considered a leader in occupational therapy as it applies to mental health and substance abuse • Studies the strengths and needs of people with serious mental illness and the occupational nature of people with substance use disorders • Currently using in-depth interviews, photos, and narratives to capture the lived experience of mental illness and recovery.

VISITING SCIENTISTS

Andrew Muriuki, Ph.D.
Post-doctoral fellow • Studying the health risks for Milwaukee residents and how these relate to their social environment • Other research interests include adolescent health and the impact of HIV/AIDS on households in Africa • Completed his doctorate in social work at the University of Missouri-Columbia • Currently writing a policy manuscript based on his dissertation, “The Role of Household Environment on Health Outcomes for Female Adolescents in Kenya.”

Mohamed Sharkawy, Ph.D.
Visiting research scholar • Holds assistant professor of social work position at Helwan University in Cairo, Egypt • Specializes in designing measures, scales, questionnaires, and interviewing and observation techniques, particularly as they relate to substance abuse and prevention • Other interests include the effectiveness of group counseling programs among rural families affected by drug abuse.