

■ Building Core Capabilities for Life

Connecting Harvard's Research to Motivational Interviewing (MI)

Video: *How Children and Adults Can Build Core Capabilities for Life*

Harvard University – Center on the Developing Child

■ <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-children-and-adults-can-build-core-capabilities-for-life/>

■ Purpose

This video highlights how both children and adults can strengthen core capabilities—such as planning, focus, emotion regulation, and problem-solving—through supportive relationships and opportunities to practice. Motivational Interviewing (MI) helps build those same capabilities by creating safe, collaborative conversations that evoke self-awareness and confidence in making change.

■ As You Watch

Listen for examples of how people build skills like:

- Staying calm under stress
- Setting and following through on goals
- Making thoughtful choices
- Learning through supportive relationships

Think about: *How do MI techniques (open questions, reflections, affirmations, summaries, asking permission) help people develop or use these same skills?*

■ Reflection Questions

1. What idea or phrase from the video stood out most to you?
2. How do the “core capabilities” connect to what we do in motivational interviewing?
3. How can using MI help participants strengthen their ability to plan, focus, and manage challenges?
4. What kind of environment or tone helps people feel safe enough to practice new ways of thinking and acting?

■ Key Takeaways

- Both MI and Harvard's model emphasize supportive, responsive relationships as the foundation for growth.
- MI conversations build self-regulation and problem-solving by helping people reflect, plan, and take ownership of change.
- Every MI conversation is an opportunity to strengthen the brain's “core capabilities” for life.