The development of a coding system to code planning talk within motivational interviewing

Lauren Copeland[a,*], Rachel McNamara[b], Mark Kelson[b], Sharon Simpson[c,1]

[a] Division of Population Medicine, Cardiff University, School of Medicine, Cardiff, UK
[b] South East Wales Trials Unit, Centre for Trials Research, College of Biomedical and Life Sciences, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK
[c] MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow, 200 Renfield Street, Glasgow, UK

ABSTRACT

Objective: Understanding mechanisms of motivational interviewing (MI) could improve practice. Planning is important for behavior change, and a component of MI. We aimed to develop a scale to measure planning talk within MI and explore the potential association between planning and weight loss maintenance (WLM).
Methods: A literature review and thematic analysis was used to develop the coding system. Reliability was tested using MI examples and a transcript. It was applied to 50 sessions and associations between planning and WLM were analyzed using logistic and linear regression.
Results: The coding system included: past, continuing, future and hypothetical plans and goal setting, varying on specificity and commitment. The percentage agreement was 86% and 75% for examples and transcript reliability respectively. Frequent planners, potentially decrease their weight 2.8 kg(-9.7, 0.6) and BMI 1.2 kg/m^2(-3.1, 0.4) more compared to less frequent planners. Frequent goal setters increase their BMI(3.6 kg/m^2, 1.5, 5.7) and weight (9.5 kg, 3.4, 15.6) compared to non-goal setters.
Conclusion: It is feasible to measure planning, with acceptable agreement. Limited conclusions for the potential associations were demonstrated.
Practice implications: This is the first scale to measure planning, an important aspect of MI which has received less attention.

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1. Introduction

Research indicates that planning has an important role in behavior change [1]. People are more likely to change their behavior if they have made a plan or implementation intention [2]. MI is designed to promote behavior change. It aims to strengthen personal motivation for, and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's own reasons for change [3]. There are four key processes within MI; engaging, evoking, focusing and planning (new stage). To date, there is a lack of evidence for specific "active ingredients" that may account for its' efficacy in relation to these health behaviors [4–6]. While there has been research looking at how people plan, only two studies have

looked at planning within the context of MI [7,8]. There was a medium sized effect of MI on action planning (when, where and how plan [7]) (d = 0.42) [8]. MI interventions can generate statistically significantly more complete action plans than self-administered planning (p < 0.01) [7]. It is important to understand how MI works as this could lead to improvements in practice and efficacy, focus research efforts and facilitate a better understanding of what helps people to change behaviour [9].

There are a number of measures that code client behavior within a MI session: Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity (MITI) [10], the Motivational Interview Skills Code (MISC) [11], the Sequence Code for Observing Process Exchanges (SCOPE) [12] and the Client Language Easy Rating (CLEAR) [13]. However these were all developed before the planning stage was added to the MI process, therefore, these measures do not code planning.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) also has potential to improve weight related behaviors [14,15]. One study testing MI intervention found that participants maintained their weight loss (6.1 lb. mean weight difference between groups (P = 0.005) at five years [16]). In order to examine whether planning is an "active ingredient" of MI, weight loss maintenance (WLM) session data was used to test and

* Corresponding author at: Division of Population Medicine, Cardiff University School of Medicine, Neuadd Meirionnydd, Heath Park, Cardiff CF14 4YS, UK.
E-mail addresses: CopelandLC@cardiff.ac.uk (L. Copeland),
McNamara@cardiff.ac.uk (R. McNamara), KelsonMJ@cf.ac.uk (M. Kelson),
Sharon.simpson@glasgow.ac.uk (S. Simpson).

develop, a coding system for planning. The coding system could also be used to examine the possible association between planning and behavior change. In this study associations between planning and weight loss maintenance (WLM) were explored.

The aim of this study was to develop the planning talk coding system- a scale to measure planning talk within an MI session. We also wanted to test the reliability of this coding system and its ability to code MI session data on the topic of WLM. Finally the coding system was used to explore the association between planning and WLM.

2. Method

2.1. Data source

The data set used in the development of the coding system and testing of planning was from a weight loss maintenance randomized controlled trial testing an MI based intervention to help people maintain weight loss (WILMA study) [14]. This data consisted of 50 audio recorded MI sessions, where participants consented for their data to be used to examine planning talk. These
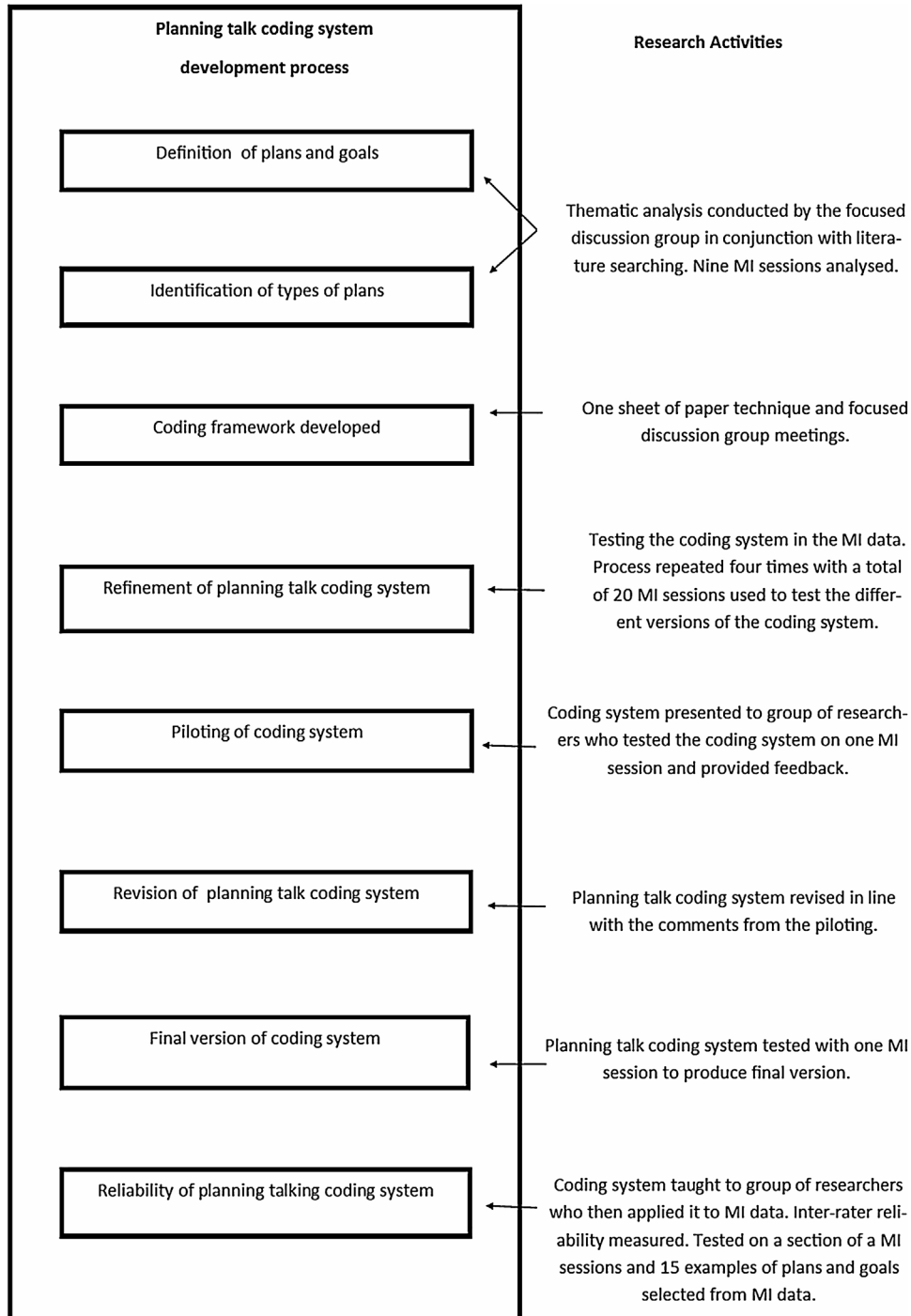
Fig. 1. The development of the planning talk coding system.