

One way to subtract is to regroup one of the whole numbers: $3\frac{1}{4} = 2 + 1 + \frac{1}{4} = 2 + \frac{4}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = 2\frac{5}{4}$. Then subtract:

$$2\frac{5}{4} - 1\frac{3}{4} = 1\frac{2}{4} = 1\frac{1}{2}.$$