

Stages of Change

Stage	Description	Primary task	Strategy
Precontemplation: Not even thinking about change or is unwilling or unable to change	Cannot see or denies having a problem Blames Feels safe in this stage	Raise awareness	Let participants know you understand and the decision to change is theirs. Explaining potential risk and benefits and encourage re-evaluation of current behavior
Contemplation: Thinking about change. See the possibility of change but is ambivalent and uncertain	Gains insight into problem Struggles to understand the problem Wants reassurance	Resolve ambivalence	Encourage evaluation of pros and cons of behavior change; identify and promote new positive outcomes because of change
Preparation: Planning to Change. Still considering what to do	Gather info on how to do it Still some ambivalence	Assist to identify appropriate change strategies	Help to identify barriers and problem-solve; break behavior changes into manageable steps; encourage self-efficacy, participant believes they can change behavior
Action: Starts the new behavior. Taking steps towards change but has not stabilized in the process	Needs greatest commitment of time and energy	Help implement change strategies and learn to eliminate potential relapses	Encourage and celebrate steps towards change; help to identify support needed
Maintenance: Has achieved the goals and is working to maintain change	Struggles to prevent relapse Success is based on sustained	Develop new skills for maintaining recovery	Help brainstorm alternatives for problems and barriers to prevent relapse; identify support; continue to celebrate change
Relapse: Resumes unhealthy behaviors	Opportunity to review action plan and remove barriers	Cope with consequences and determine what to do next	Identify cause of relapse; develop a plan for getting "back on track". Remind participant many successful people try more than once.