

Stages of Change**Prochaska, Norcross, DiClemente (1994)****Pre-contemplation: Not even thinking about change**

- Can't see the problem; denies having a problem
- Actively resists change; thinks it's hopeless, is demoralized
- Blames others for problems and consequences of problem; is defensive
- Feels safe in this stage; no chance of failure and guilt

Strategies: Let participant know you understand that they aren't ready and the decision to change is theirs; explain the potential risks; encourage re-evaluation of current behavior.

Contemplation: Thinking about the change

- Acknowledges problem and begins to think about it; gains insight into the problem
- Struggles to understand the problem, wants to know causes and possible solutions
- Wants reassurance that concerns are understood and can be overcome
- Fears failure and is highly ambivalent; this stage can last a long time

Strategies: Encourage evaluation of pros and cons of behavior change; identify and promote new, positive outcomes as a result of the change.

Preparation: Planning to change

- Still has some ambivalence; needs to convince her/himself that taking action is best
- Knows what s/he wants to do; gathers information on how to do it
- Commits to action; important not to move out of this stage until ready or may relapse

Strategies: Help to identify barriers and problem-solve; break behavior change into manageable steps; encourage self-efficacy, i.e. participants' belief that they can change behavior.

Action: Starts the new behavior

- Changes behavior and surroundings
- Needs greatest commitment of time and energy

Strategies: Encourage and celebrate steps towards change; help to identify support needed.

Maintenance: Continues new behavior

- Continues new habits and behaviors developed in action stage
- Struggles to prevent relapse; lasts from 6 months to forever (first 2 months usually hardest)
- Success is based on sustained, long-term effort and revised lifestyle

Strategies: Help brainstorm alternatives for problems and barriers to prevent relapse; identify local resources/support; continue to celebrate changes made.

Relapse: Resumes unhealthy behaviors

- Opportunity to review action plan and remove barriers for success

Strategies: Identify causes of relapse; develop a plan for getting "back on track"; remind that many successful people try more than once.

Adapted from Senior Services of Seattle/King County, Senior Wellness Project, Health Enhancement Program, Social Work Manual, 2001.