

Stages of Change: A Model for Nutrition Counseling

Stage	Description	Behavior Goals	Educational Strategies
Precontemplation <i>"I am not interested in change"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is unaware of problem and hasn't thought about change, or not interested in change. Has no intention of taking action within the next 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of need for change. Personalize information on risks and benefits. Reduce fears associated with having to change behavior (costs are too high, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create supportive climate for change. Discuss personal aspects and health consequences of poor eating or sedentary behavior. Assess knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Build on existing knowledge. Relate to benefits loved ones will receive. Focus on the impact the negative behavior has on loved ones.
Contemplation <i>"Someday I will change"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is interested in taking action, but not yet able to commit to it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase motivation and confidence to perform the new behavior. Reduce fears associated with having to change behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify problematic behaviors. Prioritize behaviors to change. Discuss motivation. Identify barriers to change and possible solutions. Suggest small, achievable steps to make a change. Focus on benefits the change will have on loved ones.
Preparation <i>"I want to change but I am not sure I can."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intends to take action soon and has taken some behavioral steps in this direction. Lacks self-efficacy to take steps necessary for long lasting change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolution of ambivalence Firm commitment Initiate change Increase self-efficacy through gradually increasing more difficult tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in developing a concrete action plan. Encourage initial small steps to change. Discuss earlier attempts to change and ways to succeed. Elicit support from family and friends.
Action <i>"I am ready to change."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has changed overt behavior for less than 6 months. Needs skills for long-term adherence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce decision. Reinforce self-confidence. Assist with self-monitoring, feedback, problem solving, social support, and reinforcement. Discuss relapse and coping strategies.
Maintenance <i>"I am in the process of changing."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has changed overt behavior for more than 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce commitment and continue changes/new behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan follow-up to support changes. Help prevent relapse. Assist in coping, reminding, finding alternatives, and avoiding slips/relapses.

Source:

Adapted from: Story M, Holt K, Sofka D, eds. 2000. *Bright Futures in Practice: Nutrition*. Arlington, VA: National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health: Appendix F: "Stages of Change – A Model for Nutrition Counseling," page 251.