

## Stages of Change: A Model for Nutrition Counseling

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

**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.