

Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing

Client's Stage of Change	Description of Stage	Motivational Interviewing Steps
Pre-contemplation	Person is not yet considering a change or is unwilling or unable to change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish rapport, ask permission and build trust ▪ Raise doubts or concerns in behavior to help develop an awareness of consequences ▪ Developing discrepancy between present behavior and important goals motivate change.
Contemplation	Person acknowledges concerns, and is considering possibility of change, but is ambivalent, uncertain, and even resistant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help person “tip the decisional balance scales” toward change. ▪ Ambivalence is normal and acceptance by expressing empathy facilitates change. ▪ Skillful reflective listening is essential. ▪ Explore ambivalence to help remove obstacles. Use OARS skills. ▪ Roll with resistance – perceptions can be shifted and new perspectives are invited, but not imposed; client is valuable resource in finding solutions to problems. ▪ Elicit self-motivational statements of intent and commitment to change. Person should present arguments for change.
Preparation	Person is committed to, and planning to make a change in the near future. However, person is still considering what to do and can't do it alone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognize change talk (DARN-CT) ▪ Elicit self-motivating statements or change talk. ▪ Reinforce or respond to change talk by using OARS to help person develop concrete plans and encourage motivation / commitment already present. ▪ Clarify client's goals and strategies for change. ▪ Negotiate action plan for change
Action	Person is actively taking steps to modify behaviors and is making required life-style changes, often with mix of confidence and anxiety. Change has not yet reached a stable state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support self-efficacy or the belief and confidence in the possibility of making change. ▪ Support realistic view of change through small steps. Client is responsible for choosing from a range of alternative approaches available, and for carrying out change strategies. ▪ Help client identify “risk situations, and develop appropriate coping strategies to overcome these.
Maintenance	Person has achieved initial goals and has sustained change for minimum of 6 months. Now working to maintain goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help client continue and adapt action plans. ▪ Help client build strategies for coping with risk situations and avoiding relapse.

Relapse	Person has experienced a relapse and must now cope with consequences, and decide what to do next.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Help client reenter the change cycle and praise willingness to reconsider positive change.▪ Knowing factors that may trigger relapse serves as useful information for future change attempts.▪ Assist person in finding alternative to coping strategies / behaviors.
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Adapted from pg. 37 from Florida What Works Initiative