

# Stages of Change

Stage of Change	Barriers	Goal of Counseling	Techniques to Use
Pre-Contemplation (not ready to change diet and physical activity behaviors to lose weight)	Not important to patient Low confidence Denial Defensiveness Lack of awareness	<b>Advise and encourage contemplation</b>	Express empathy Develop discrepancy Listen reflectively Examine the pros and cons of change, summarize Provide information if needed Acknowledge decision Offer help when ready
Contemplation (thinking about changing diet and physical activity behaviors to lose weight)	Low confidence Procrastination Low social or environmental support Competing demands	<b>Explore ambivalence and shift towards making a decision to change</b>	Express empathy Develop discrepancy Acknowledge ambivalence Listen reflectively Examine pros and cons of change, summarize Provide information if needed Affirm positive statements Reinforce partnership and willingness to help
Preparation (getting ready to change diet and physical activity behaviors to lose weight)	Confidence may still be low Unsure of specific actions	<b>Strengthen commitment, plan specific actions</b>	Provide information and discuss options Provide assistance with selected actions Express confidence in patient Affirm positive statements Reinforce partnership and willingness to help
Action (has begun changes in diet and physical activity behaviors)	Some obstacles persist Confidence may still be low At risk for relapse	<b>Praise and reinforce, plan for contingencies</b>	Provide frequent positive affirmation Provide ongoing assistance with barriers Express confidence in ability to maintain the change
Maintenance (successfully maintained new behaviors for at least 6 months)	At risk for relapse	<b>Praise and reinforce, plan for contingencies</b>	Provide frequent positive affirmation Provide ongoing assistance with barriers Express confidence in ability to maintain the change