National Healthcare Communication Programme

Stages of change

Conversations about healthcare behaviours



Pre-contemplation

No recognition of need for or interest in change



Contemplation

Thinking about changing



Preparation

Planning for change



Action

Adopting new habits



Maintenance

Ongoing practice of new behaviour



Relapse

Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982

Making conversations easier

HSE

Stages of change

This is a model of the stages of change. It is important to note that people typically move back and forth between the stages and move through the stages at different rates.

Pre-contemplation
People at this stage are not thinking about change and may be unaware that a problem exists *(for example, the smoker who is not thinking about giving up smoking).* The primary task at this stage is: **raising awareness.**

Contemplation
People at this stage can see the possibility of change but may be ambivalent and uncertain, *(for example, the smoker on New Year's Eve who is thinking that stopping smoking will be their New Year's resolution).* The primary task here is: **resolving ambivalence/helping to choose change.**

Preparation
In preparation the person is considering and planning to change a behaviour and has taken steps toward change, *(for example, the smoker who throws out all of their ash trays on New Year's Day).* The primary task here is: **to assist the person to identify appropriate change strategies and provide support and encouragement.**

Action
In action the person is actively doing things to change or modify behaviour but hasn't stabilised in the process. The primary task here is: **to support the person to implement change strategies & learn to eliminate potential relapses.**

Maintenance
In maintenance the person has achieved the goals and is working to maintain change (for at least 6 months) until it becomes permanent. The primary task here is: **to support and develop new skills for maintaining recovery.**

Relapse
In relapse the person has experienced a recurrence of the symptoms. The task here is to *cope with the consequences and determine what to do next.* Thinking about where people are in relation to the stages of change is important for us to know how best we can support them.

This Skills Card is the work of the National Healthcare Communication Programme.