

Module 7, Lesson 5 Handout: Stages Of Change

There are 5 stages of change

Precontemplation -- you don't even know there's a problem or behavior that needs to be changed. An example is the client who comes to you and says "my doctor said I have to lose 20 pounds"

Contemplation -- Acknowledging that there is a problem but not yet ready or sure of wanting to make a change. Your client says "I know I have to lose 20 pounds, but I can't give up my frappuccino habit

Preparation/Determination -- Getting ready to change. Here your client is gathering information and setting himself up to do the work. "I am seeing you, I joined the gym in my work building and I have some questions about shopping for my meal plan."

Action -- Changing behavior. Your client will be keeping his appointments with you, maintaining his journal, reaching out when he's off track and seeing progress in his work. "Wow, I feel great and 3 pounds in a month has me under 200!"

Maintenance -- Maintaining the behavior change. Just like it sounds, maintaining is sticking to the behavior changes once the goal is met.

Relapse -- Returning to older behaviors and abandoning the new changes. This can happen between any stage! Sometimes continued support is needed for the long term. Some people are on the wagon for life, but still go to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings daily to prevent a slip. Well, some of your clients are going to come meet with you just to prevent relapsing or regressing.

If you can figure out where your client is in this readiness to change model, you can adjust your approach and meet them where they're at! It will make you a better helper and help your client feel really understood.