

Prochaska and DiClemente's Stages of Change

Precontemplation: “What, me have a problem? No way.”

- Unaware of the problem or greatly underestimates it.
- Not thinking about changing.
- Actively resistant to the idea of change.
- No intention to change within the next 6 months.
- Seeks help from others when under pressure.

Contemplation: “Maybe I need to change something.”

- Aware a problem exists.
- Thinking of changing, but ambivalent.
- Wants to change in the next six months, but has no specific plan.
- Not yet made a commitment to action.
- Despite good intentions, may languish at this stage for a long time.

Preparation: “Yes, there’s a problem, and I’m going to change it.”

- Has already made some unsuccessful change attempts.
- Thinking about change, intends to take action in the next month.
- Determines best method(s) for decisive action.
- Making detailed plans for the change.

Action: “I’m doing something about my problem.”

- Major behavioral change occurs now.
- Change is activated (for less than 6 months).
- Biggest risk is relapse.
- This stage requires considerable time and energy.

Maintenance: “I’m an old pro now.”

- Has been regularly practicing the change for 6 months or more.
- Continues to incorporate change into current lifestyle.
- Works to consolidate gains and prevent relapse.
- Remains free of problem behavior, with effective substitutes.



Four General Principles of Motivational Enhancement

Principle 1: Express Empathy

- Listen more than you speak.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Meet the client “where they are.”
- Ambivalence is normal.
- Acceptance facilitates change.

Principle 2: Develop Discrepancy

- Share observations of perceived discrepancy between present behavior and important personal goals or values.
- The client rather than the advisor should present the arguments for change.

Principle 3: Roll With Resistance

- Avoid arguing for change.
- Resistance is not directly opposed.
- Resistance is a signal to respond differently.
- New perspectives are invited but not imposed.
- The client is a primary resource in finding answers and solutions.

Principle 4: Support Self-Efficacy

(Self-efficacy is one’s belief that they are capable of making a desired change.)

- A person’s belief in the possibility of change is an important motivator.
- The client, not the advisor, is responsible for choosing and carrying out change.
- The advisor’s own belief in the person’s ability to change becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.



EREDITA CONSULTING.COM

886 Johnnie Dodds Blvd. Suite 203 | Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464 | 843.371.6067

Stage-specific Motivational Elements

Precontemplation: "What, me have a problem? No way."

- "Meet them where they are"
- Accept that this is their choice / right
- Encourage evaluation, exploration, education
- Personalize

Contemplation: "Maybe I need to change something."

- Listen, validate, encourage
- Check for wishful thinking
- Emphasize con's of the problem
- Identify and promote new, positive outcome expectations

Preparation: "Yes, there's a problem, and I'm going to change it."

- Emphasize pro's of change
- Encourage small initial steps
- Verify they have underlying skills for behavior change
- Identify and assist in problem solving regarding obstacles to change
- Help them identify social support

Action: "I'm doing something about my problem."

- Focus on restructuring cues (i.e., changing the environment)
- Focus on social support and accountability
- Bolster self-efficacy for dealing with obstacles
- Combat feelings of loss and reiterate long-term benefits

Maintenance: "I'm an old pro now."

- Plan for follow-up support
- Reinforce internal rewards
- Discuss coping with "relapse" (the return of old behaviors)



EREDITA CONSULTING.COM

886 Johnnie Dodds Blvd. Suite 203 | Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464 | 843.371.6067