

# Stages of change

Conversations about healthcare behaviours



*Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982*

**Making conversations easier**

## 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.

## Module

The content of this skills card supports the Module of the National Healthcare Communication Programme - 'Motivational Interviewing'. Additional information can be found on the webpage at [www.hse.ie/nhcprogramme.ie](http://www.hse.ie/nhcprogramme.ie)