

Assessing Participants' Readiness to Change

Participants entering the lifestyle change program must be prepared to make lifelong changes to their behaviors and surroundings. If participants enroll in the program resistant and unwilling to change their current behaviors, the likelihood that they will achieve success in reaching their goals decreases. This section will help you to better understand the behavior change process and evaluate a potential participant's readiness to change.

This section will cover:

- The meaning of readiness to change
- The stages of change process
- Tools to assess readiness to change

Readiness to Change: What is it?

Readiness to change refers to how willing someone is to change their behavior. To ensure that participants receive the greatest benefits from the lifestyle change program, it's important to assess the readiness level of each individual.

Ways to Assess a Participant's Readiness to Change

Prior to enrollment in the lifestyle change program, it is important to assess participants' readiness to change. There are numerous ways to assess participant readiness, but this overview will focus on the Readiness to Change Questionnaire and a Readiness to Change Screening tool.

Transtheoretical Model: Stages of Change



Norcross, J.C., Krebs, P.M., & Prochaska, J.O. Stages of Change. (2012). *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 67(2), 143-154.

The Transtheoretical Model describes a five stage process of behavior change. This model is helpful because recognizing the stage a participant is in allows you to gain insight into the likelihood of success of a potential participant in the program, and determine whether they should begin the lifestyle intervention or delay entry until they have a stronger commitment.

The stages of change process includes the following:

- **Precontemplation**- Participants in the precontemplation stage do not have any intention of changing their behavior within the near future. They may be unaware that they need to make a behavior change.
- **Contemplation** – If a participant is in the contemplation stage, they will have just begun to think about making a change within the near future (6 months). Changing is on their mind, but they are not ready to take action yet.
- **Preparation** – A participant in this stage is planning on making a change soon, often within the next month.
- **Action** – Participants in this stage have changed their behavior within the last 6 months. Tips for maintaining a commitment to the behavior are important for participants in this stage.
- **Maintenance** – In the maintenance stage, participants have sustained a behavior change for more than 6 months. Participants will need to continue to take steps to prevent from relapsing back into old behaviors that can lead to weight gain.

Readiness to Change Questionnaire

Where am I right now?

Thinking about your physical activity and eating over the past three months, please answer the following questions. Please circle one number to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Check “Don’t know or refused” if you do not know or do not want to answer.)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don’t Know or Refused
I eat healthily.	5	4	3	2	1	
I get enough physical activity.	5	4	3	2	1	
I want to eat more healthily.	5	4	3	2	1	
I want to be more physically active.	5	4	3	2	1	

How confident are you that you can make changes now?

Please circle one number to indicate how confident you are that you can make the following changes. (Check “Don’t know or refused” if you do not know or do not want to answer.)

<u>Physical Activity:</u>	Sure I can	Think I can	Not sure I can	Don’t think I can	Don’t know or refused
Get physical activity more often	4	3	2	1	
Be physically active for longer time	4	3	2	1	



<u>Eating:</u>	Sure I can	Think I can	Not sure I can	Don't think I can	Don't know or refused
Eat more healthful food	4	3	2	1	
Overeat less often	4	3	2	1	

NatioAdapted from: National Diabetes Education Program. (2008). *Power to Prevent: A Family Lifestyle Approach to Diabetes Prevention*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Retrieved from <http://ndep.nih.gov/media/power-to-prevent-508.pdf>



Readiness to Change Screening Tool

1. **Are you here because YOU want to make changes?** If you feel pressured into coming by your spouse, doctor or a friend, you may not be ready to lose weight. There a good chance you'll be setting yourself up to fail.
2. **Are you ready to make a life-long commitment to healthy moderate eating habits and regular physical activity?** Think about the amount of weight you want to lose. Everyone wants to lose weight instantly, but in this program you will lose weight gradually. If you're willing to spend time developing new eating and activity patterns over the next several months, there's good chance this program is for you.
3. **Are you ready to make this a priority in your life?** Changing long upheld behaviors and losing weight takes time and effort. Besides attending the session weekly for 16 weeks then monthly for the next year, you'll need to spend time recording your food and activity each day. If you're already *overcommitted*, this might not be the right time for you to start. This program will be available when it works best for you to begin.
4. **Are you willing to be accountable for your food and physical activity choices?** You may have been in other programs where everything is laid out for you. The key of this program is to find what works best for you. This will involve some serious thinking and decisions about what you are willing to change.
5. **Are you ready to create a target goal weight that is realistic and healthy for you?** Studies have shown that a weight loss of 7% is sufficient to provide health benefits and reduce risks for type 2 diabetes. If you have a substantial amount to lose, you may have intermediate goals. The success of this program involves achieving a weight that can be maintained by staying active and eating at sufficient levels.

Your commitment is important as it takes hard work to change habits. We know this program works, as it's based on years of research. To be successful, we ask you think about your readiness, sign a contract and make a commitment to the goals of 7% weight loss and 150 minutes of weekly physical activity.

Signature:

Date:
