

Stages of Change

The Stages of Change model delineates the stages people go through when making a change in behavior. The following shows how you can use a patient's stage of change to have a patient-centered discussion about fitness.

Patient Characteristics	Stage of Change	Discussion Topics	Example Questions	Potential AIM Patient Education Handouts
Not currently interested or considering change, "ignorance is bliss"	Pre-contemplation	Discuss the potential benefits of lifestyle changes and indicate that you are available if and when they are ready to discuss it further.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about your health these days? • Would you consider me a resource if you decide to make changes in the future? 	
Open to making changes for better health at this time, "sitting on the fence"	Contemplation	Discuss some of the changes they could make and help them set an achievable goal (e.g., eat more fruits and vegetables, make time for exercise or gain more "me" time for hobbies, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you willing to make some changes to improve your cholesterol levels? • What would you like to do to try to simplify your life? • Would you be open to exploring a couple of ways to be more active every day? • What are some things you could see yourself doing to relax? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Little Bit Counts • One Step at a Time • All Foods Fit • Life Balance
Ready to commit to changes, "testing the waters"	Preparation	Let patients decide what their goals are. The emphasis should be on the patient's goal and how he or she can make small changes in daily life for meaningful, lifelong results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you like to see come out of trying to eat better? • What do you want out of this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food & Activity Journal • One Step at a Time • Getting Started • Overcoming Physical Activity/Exercise Obstacles • Am I Hungry? • End Mindless Eating • Search Your Shelf
Already doing something to improve their health, "Charge!"	Action	Offer support, referrals and tools. Anticipate challenges and set backs and discuss ways to handle them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You seem healthier than you were at our last visit. Have you been doing anything different? • You look really fit today. Tell me what you have been doing since I last saw you. • You seem to be in a good mood today. Tell me what you've been up to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food & Activity Journal • Overcoming Physical Activity/Exercise Obstacles • Fat Facts • Think Your Drink • Search Your Shelf • Manage Your Stress

AIM patient education handouts are available at www.americansinmotion.org.