

Interventions and the stages of change¹

Change is a gradual, multi-step process. It does not begin with a motivated individual and an all-or-nothing attitude. Rather, people usually start without any intention to change and then transition through different stages until the desired change is implemented and maintained.

According to The Stages of Motivational Readiness for Change Model (SOC) developed by Prochaska & DiClemente in 1983,² there are five distinct stages of change. Facilitators who understand these stages have a unique opportunity to tailor their interventions to their participants' stages of change and ultimately help them reach their wellness goals.

Stage 1: Pre-contemplation

At this stage, the participant has no intention of changing an existing behavior. It is in this stage that a facilitator must increase a participant's awareness about the need for a change.

Stage 2: Contemplation

Now that the participant is aware of a need to change, he or she is thinking about the change. Facilitators must motivate participants in this stage in order to tip the balance toward change.

Stage 3: Preparation

The participant has decided to change and is making a plan to implement that change. Facilitators can help in this stage by aiding in the development of a concrete action plan the participant can follow.

Stage 4: Action

Here, the participant is implementing the change by following the action plan. At this point, participants need feedback and support from their facilitators.

Stage 5: Maintenance

In the final stage, the participant has changed the behavior and continues the desirable actions. Facilitators can help maintain the change by providing reminders to avoid slips in the behavior.

An important motivational principle articulated by Rollnick and Miller³ is that readiness to change is not a participant trait but is an ever-changing product of interpersonal interaction. The facilitator therefore should be highly attentive and responsive to participants' motivational signs. Facilitators also should be willing to modify their motivational strategies if the participant is showing a resistance to change.

Read more about the stages of change and motivation in the in the Enhancing Motivation and Engagement section of the Implementation Guide, which can be found in the front of the Team Solutions binder.

References:

¹Medalia, A. 2009. Enhancing Motivation and Engagement. In *Team Solutions*, Implementation Guide, page 4-5.

²Prochaska, J.O., & DiClemente, C.C. (1983). Stages and processes of self-change of smoking: Toward an integrative model of change. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

³Miller, W.R. and Rollnick, S. (1991) *Motivational Interviewing*, New York; Guilford.