

## **Motivational Interviewing – Stages of Change**

*Motivational Interviewing is based on the understanding that we encounter individuals in varying stages of readiness for change. The following is a brief synopsis of stage-appropriate strategies to engage individuals in making healthy lifestyle changes. An important concept is that stage-appropriate interventions minimize the risk that individuals will push back and lose ground by resorting to an earlier stage of change.*

### **Pre-contemplation**

*Individuals in this stage are not even thinking about making a change.*

- Gather history and listen for any discrepancies between the individual's stated goals and their behaviors.
- Educate individuals about health risks related to lifestyle choices or behaviors.
- Instill hope by providing information about the possible mitigation of health risks through lifestyle change.

### **Contemplation**

*Individuals are beginning to consider making a change, but are not yet ready to make a commitment.*

- Explore **both** the positive and negative aspects of the lifestyle choice under consideration
- Help individual appreciate the disconnect between stated goals or concerns and lifestyle choices, using reflective listening.
- Gently nudge the balance in the direction of change by reflecting back what the individual has told you.

### **Preparation**

*Individuals in this stage are preparing for action to change in the foreseeable future.*

- Assess the individual's commitment to change
- Offer a menu of choices (e.g., self-help groups, medications, online resources, referrals) and strategies
- Identify supports and barriers to change

### **Action**

*Individuals in this stage are actively implementing a plan for change.*

- Identify any unexpected hurdles and help individual define coping strategies
- Help individual identify new sources of support
- Track progress with the individual.

### **Maintenance**

*Individuals in this stage are maintaining the change they have made.*

- Continue to track gains associated with the change
- Identify people, places, and things which could pose triggers to relapse or risk and continue to help individual build skills to prevent negative outcomes/relapse.
- Assist individual in actively maintaining the change they have made