

5 stages of change

Changing the way you do things can be hard, especially when it comes to managing diabetes. When we make a change in our lives, we go through different stages. Some stages may be easier or harder than others. Knowing what stage you're in can help you deal with challenges and make progress toward your goal.

STAGE

1

Pre-contemplation

Someone in this stage might say,

I've always been heavy. Everyone in our family is. It's no big deal.

In this stage, you may:

- Not be thinking about change yet
- Not know there's a problem
- Know there's a problem, but you're not thinking about change anytime soon

What you can do:

- Become more aware of the need for change
- Learn more about problems that can happen if you don't change
- Learn more about how making the change can help you

STAGE

2

Contemplation

Someone in this stage might say,

I know that being overweight can lead to diabetes. But I hate diets.

In this stage, you may:

- Start thinking about change
- Know there's a problem, but you're not sure you can change

What you can do:

- Think about why you want to change
- Decide what you want to change
- Get information about what you want to change and how to do it

STAGE

3

Preparation

Someone in this stage might say,

I want to lose some weight. I'm going to find out what I need to do.

In this stage, you may:

- Be serious about making a change soon
- Get more information and start making a plan to change
- Tell your family and friends that you're planning to change

What you can do:

- Make an action plan on how to accomplish your goal
- Ask your diabetes team for help on how to change
- Write down what you'll do and when you'll start
- Decide what small steps you can take toward your goal

STAGE

4

Action

Someone in this stage might say,

I quit drinking soda. This will help me lose weight.

In this stage, you may:

- Start working on your action plan
- Make small changes that can lead to bigger ones
- May relapse, which is normal

What you can do:

- Get help from your doctor, family, and friends
- Join a support group
- Get ideas on how to deal with setbacks
- Celebrate your successes, even the small ones
- Don't give up if you relapse

Maintenance

Someone in this stage might say,

I lost 10 pounds and I feel great. I'm going to keep walking every day.

In this stage, you may:

- Keep working on your action plan
- May have setbacks, but you get back on track

What you can do:

- Remind yourself of your success, such as how much you have exercised, how long you have stuck with your meal plan, or how much better you feel
- Ask family, friends, and your diabetes team care for help with new challenges
- Don't be hard on yourself if you go off your meal plan or stop exercising
- Keep reminding yourself of your goals