

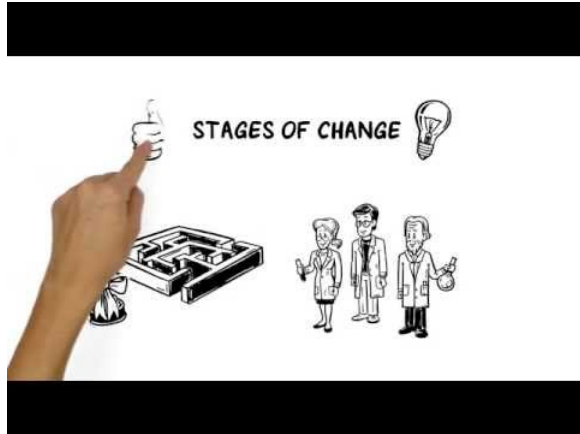
1.5: Behavior Change and Goal Setting

Transtheoretical Model (Stages of Change)

The **transtheoretical model** of behavior change, developed by Prochaska and DiClemente, assesses an individual's readiness to implement a healthier behavior, and provides insight into the decision making process that leads to action. For many people, changing or modifying a behavior that is unhealthy or potentially harmful can be quite challenging. Here are the stages that lead to behavior change:

- **Precontemplation** (Not Ready) – You are not intending to take action in the foreseeable future, and can be unaware that your behavior is problematic
- **Contemplation** (Getting Ready) – You are beginning to recognize that your behavior is problematic, and start to look at the pros and cons of your continued actions
- **Preparation** (Ready) – You are intending to take action in the immediate future, and may begin taking small steps toward behavior change
- **Action** – You are making actual changes to your problem behavior by incorporating healthy choices/behaviors into your life
- **Maintenance** – You have been able to sustain action for at least six months and are working to prevent relapse into previous unhealthy behaviors

Check out this supplemental video to review the main concepts of the Transtheoretical Model:



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SMART Goal Setting

Have you ever said to yourself that you need to “eat healthier” or “exercise more” to improve your overall health? How well did that work for you? In most cases, probably not very well. That’s because these statements are too vague and do not give us any direction for what truly needs to be done to achieve such goals. To have a better chance at being successful, try using the **SMART** acronym for setting your goals (**S**= Specific, **M**= Measurable, **A**=Attainable, **R**= Realistic, **T**= Time-oriented):

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Realistic

Timely

Specific – Create a goal that has a focused and clear path for what you actually need to do. Examples:

- I will drink 8 ounces of water 3 times per day
- I will walk briskly for 30 minutes, 5 times per week
- I will reduce my soda intake to no more than 2 cans of soda per week

Do you see how that is more helpful than just saying you will eat healthier or exercise more? It gives you direction.

Measurable – This enables you to track your progress, and ties in with the “specific” component. The above examples all have actual numbers associated with the behavior change that let you know whether or not it has been met.

Attainable – Make sure that your goal is within your capabilities and not too far out of reach. For example, if you have not been physically active for a number of years, it would be highly unlikely that you would be able to achieve a goal of running a marathon within the next month.

Realistic – Try to ensure that your goal is something you will be able to continue doing and incorporate as part of your regular routine/lifestyle. For example, if you made a goal to kayak 2 times each week, but don’t have the financial resources to purchase or rent the equipment, no way to transport it, or are not close enough to a body of water in which to partake in kayaking, then this is not going to be feasible.

Time-oriented – Give yourself a target date or deadline in which the goal needs to be met. This will keep you on track and motivated to reach the goal, while also evaluating your progress.

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- Supplemental Video - Stages of Change. **Authored by:** Dr. Wendy Guess. **Located at:** <https://youtu.be/Twlow2pXsv0>. **License:** Other. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License

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