



Roadmaps for Clinical Practice

Case Studies in Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

**Assessment and Management of Adult Obesity:
A Primer for Physicians**

Assessment of patient readiness

Figure 3.2 Patient Readiness Checklist

Motivation/support

- How important is it that you lose weight at this time?
- Have you tried to lose weight before? What factors have led to your success and what has made weight loss difficult? (For example, cost, peer pressure, family, etc.)
- Is your decision to lose weight your own, or for someone else?
- Is your family supportive?
- Who, if anyone, is supportive of your decision to begin a weight loss program?
- What do you consider the benefits of weight loss?
- What would you have to sacrifice? What are the down sides?

Stressful life events

- Are there events in your life right now that might make losing weight especially difficult? (For example, work responsibilities, family commitments)
- If now is not a convenient time for weight loss, what would it take for you to be ready to lose weight? When do you think you might be ready to begin losing weight?

Psychiatric issues

- What is your mood like most of the time? Do you feel you have the needed energy to lose weight? (may need to assess for depression)
- Do you feel that you eat what most people would consider a large amount of food in a short period of time? Do you feel out of control during this time? (may need to assess for binge eating disorders)
- Do you ever forcibly vomit, use laxatives, or engage in excessive physical activity as a means of controlling weight? (may need to assess for bulimia nervosa)

Time availability/constraints

- How much time are you able to devote to physical activity on a weekly basis?
- Do you believe that you can make time to record your caloric intake?
- Can you take time out of your schedule to relax and engage in personal activities?

Weight-loss goals/expectations

- How much weight do you expect to lose?
- How fast do you expect to lose weight?
- What other benefits do you expect to experience as a result of weight loss?

Adapted with permission from the Wellness Institute, Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Figure 3.4 Applying the Stages of Change Model to Assess Readiness

Stage	Characteristic	Patient verbal cue	Appropriate intervention	Sample dialogue
Precontemplation	Unaware of problem, no interest in change	"I'm not really interested in weight loss. It's not a problem."	Provide information about health risks and benefits of weight loss	"Would you like to read some information about the health aspects of obesity?"
Contemplation	Aware of problem, beginning to think of changing	"I know I need to lose weight, but with all that's going on in my life right now, I'm not sure I can."	Help resolve ambivalence; discuss barriers	"Let's look at the benefits of weight loss, as well as what you may need to change."
Preparation	Realizes benefits of making changes and thinking about how to change	"I have to lose weight, and I'm planning to do that."	Teach behavior modification; provide education	"Let's take a closer look at how you can reduce some of the calories you eat and how to increase your activity during the day."
Action	Actively taking steps toward change	"I'm doing my best. This is harder than I thought."	Provide support and guidance, with a focus on the long term	"It's terrific that you're working so hard. What problems have you had so far? How have you solved them?"
Maintenance	Initial treatment goals reached	"I've learned a lot through this process."	Relapse control	"What situations continue to tempt you to overeat? What can be helpful for the next time you face such a situation?"

Adapted from Prochaska JO, DiClemente CC. Toward a comprehensive model of change. In: Miller WR, ed. *Treating Addictive Behaviors*. New York, NY: Plenum; 1986:3–27.