

Ultra-Brief Personal Action Planning (UB-PAP)

The Ultra-Brief Personal Action Plan has five core elements:

1. The plan must be truly patient-centered, focused on what the patient himself or herself actually wants to do, not on what the doctor tells him or her to do.
2. The plan must be behaviorally specific—that is, very concrete and specific about what, when, where, how long, etc.
3. The patient should restate the complete plan (i.e., make a “commitment statement”).
4. The plan should be associated with a level of confidence (on a scale of 1 to 10) of 7 or greater. If the confidence level is less than 7, the clinician and patient should begin problem-solving on strategies to modify the plan.
5. There should be a specific date and mechanism for follow-up (or accountability).

Ultra-Brief Personal Action Planning is structured around three core questions:

1. Elicit patient preferences/desires for behavior change.

“Is there anything you would like to do for your health over the next few days (weeks) before I see you again?”

- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How often?
- Elicit commitment statement (e.g., “I will walk for 20 minutes, in my neighborhood, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday before dinner”).

2. Check confidence level.

“That sounds like a great plan. But changing behavior and sticking with a plan is actually very hard for most of us. If you consider a confidence scale of 1 to 10, where ‘10’ means you are very confident you will carry out the plan and ‘1’ means you are not at all confident, about how confident are you?”

If confidence level is less than 7, then problem-solve to identify solutions.

“That’s great that you feel a confidence level of 5. That’s a lot higher than 1. I wonder if there are some ways we could modify the plan so you might get to a confidence level of 7 or more. Perhaps you could choose a less ambitious goal, ask for help from a friend or family member, or think of something else that might help you feel more confident about carrying out the plan?”

3. Arrange follow-up.

“Great, then let’s make a date for our next appointment, so we can check on how you’re doing with your plan.”