



## Lab A1-4 Stages of Change

The stages of change model of behavior change includes six well-defined stages that people move through as they work to change a target behavior. It is important to determine what stage you are in now so that you can choose appropriate techniques for progressing through the cycle of change.

Target behavior/problem: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal of behavior change: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples of target behaviors include inactivity, smoking, eating candy bars every afternoon, and never wearing a safety belt. The goal of your behavior change program might be exercising regularly, quitting smoking, eating only one candy bar a week, or wearing a safety belt every time you are a driver or passenger in a car.

### Part I. Assess Your Stage

To determine your stage, check true or false for each of the following statements:

- | True  | False |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | 1. I changed my target behavior more than 6 months ago.                |
| _____ | _____ | 2. I have taken action on my target behavior within the past 6 months. |
| _____ | _____ | 3. I am intending to take action in the next month.                    |
| _____ | _____ | 4. I am intending to take action in the next 6 months.                 |

Find the stage that corresponds to your responses:

- False for all four statements = Precontemplation
- True for statement 4, false for statements 1–3 = Contemplation
- True for statements 3 and 4, false for statements 1 and 2 = Preparation
- True for statement 2, false for statement 1 = Action
- True for statement 1 = Maintenance

### Part II. Strategies for Change

To help you move forward in the cycle of change, try the techniques and strategies listed below for your stages. (You may find it helpful to work through the strategies for all the stages.) Put a check next to any strategy that you complete.

#### Precontemplation

- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate your target behavior using information from your text and other sources. Make a list of the ways it affects you now and how it may affect you in the future. Include both the direct negative effects of your target behavior and the positive effects that you miss out on by not changing your behavior. For example, an inactive lifestyle affects your overall health by raising your risk for heart disease; however, an inactive lifestyle also means that you miss out on the positive effects of regular physical activity, including reduced stress and improved mood and self-image.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(over)

**LAB AI-4** (continued)

---

---

— Become aware of the mental defenses you use to resist change; examples of defenses include denying the consequences of your target behavior (“It doesn’t matter if I wait a few years to quit smoking”) and rationalizing your reasons for not changing (“I don’t have time to be more active”). List some of the key mental defense mechanisms that you use to resist change.

---

---

---

— Enlist friends and family members to help you learn more about your target behavior and the defenses that block your progress. List the people you’ve spoken with, and briefly describe what they told you about the defense mechanisms you use.

---

---

---

— Identify and list campus and community resources that can help you change your target behavior—for example, a stop-smoking course or a stress-management workshop.

---

---

---

**Contemplation**

— Keep a journal of your target behavior to establish a baseline. Depending on your target behavior, you may want to monitor a single behavior, such as your cigarette use or the foods you eat, or you may want to keep daily activity records to determine how you could make time for more physical activity or another new behavior. Develop an appropriate log, and then track your behavior for a week or two. Your records will help you develop a successful behavior change program. For more information on tracking your behavior, refer to Chapter 1 and to Activity 3 in the Behavior Change Workbook in your text.

— Complete a cost-benefit analysis of your target behavior.

Pros of current (target) behavior

Cons of current (target) behavior

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Pros of changing

Cons of changing

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

(over)

**LAB AI-4** (continued)

For successful behavior change, the pros of changing must outweigh the cons. To build your commitment to change, try expanding your list of the benefits of changing—include the short- and long-term benefits to all of the dimensions of wellness. Next, look at each of the cons of changing and identify the key barriers that are blocking you from changing your behavior. Develop a plan or strategy for building your motivation to overcome each barrier. (For example, if you believe you can't make time for a 40-minute exercise session, try looking for ways to incorporate shorter bouts of physical activity into your daily routine.)

Barrier	Strategy
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_ Engage your emotions through strategies such as imagining your life without changing, watching movies related to your target behavior, and becoming more aware of the current effects of your target behavior (for example, blow cigarette smoke or spit tobacco juice into a white handkerchief, have someone videotape you while drunk or hungover, or make a pile of the amount of candy or junk food you eat in a month). List the strategies you tried.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Create a new self-image. Imagine yourself and your life after you change your target behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Enlist the help of friends and family members to support your efforts and help you identify the causes and consequences of your target behavior. Ask about the effects of your behavior both on yourself and on the people in your life. For example, a roommate may tell you that he never ate candy in the evening until he started living with you, or a younger sister may tell you that your smoking habit influenced her decision to take up smoking. List the people you've spoken with, and briefly describe what they told you about your target behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**LAB AI-4** (continued)

**Preparation**

\_\_\_\_\_ Create a plan for change that includes a start date, realistic intermediate and final goals, rewards for achieving each goal, and the specifics of your plan—exactly how you will go about changing your behavior (see Chapter 1 in your text).

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ Create and sign a contract that puts your commitment to change in written form. Sample plans and contracts appear in Chapters 1 and 7 in your text; a blank contract is included in Activity 8 of the Behavior Change Workbook in your text.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete any necessary preparatory steps for your program, such as signing up for a stop-smoking or stress-management workshop or purchasing walking shoes, nicotine replacement patches, or a special calendar to track your progress.

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ Tell the people in your life about the change you'll be making, and enlist their help. List the people you've spoken with and how they will help in your program for change.

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ Practice visualization and self-talk to prepare yourself for the change you'll be making. Imagine yourself in challenging situations—surrounded by smoking friends when you are trying to quit or invited for a late-night pizza when you are trying to cut back on snacking—and mentally prepare yourself for appropriate action.

Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

Appropriate action to visualize: \_\_\_\_\_

Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

Appropriate action to visualize: \_\_\_\_\_

Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

Appropriate action to visualize: \_\_\_\_\_

**LAB AI-4** (continued)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Try your desired behavior for a day or a week; even a brief period of success will help boost self-efficacy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make change a priority in your life; plan to commit the necessary time and effort to change. If you need to bolster your motivation and commitment, complete Activity 9 in the Behavior Change Workbook.

**Action**

See pages 16–19 in your text for a detailed discussion of strategies for the action stage of change.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Use a journal to monitor your behavior. Depending on your target behavior, you may be able to use the same journal format that you used for the Contemplation stage or you may need to create a new one (see Activity 3 in the Behavior Change Workbook in your text).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make changes in your environment that will discourage your target behavior and encourage healthier choices. For example, putting your exercise shoes and clothes out the night before a planned morning walk may help encourage you to stick with your walking program. Look at the journal records you kept of your target behavior, identify cues that trigger your target behavior, and develop strategies for avoiding these cues or for making different choices.

Environmental cue	Strategy
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

For a detailed look at the environmental cues affecting your target behavior, complete Activity 7 in the Behavior Change Workbook.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Manage your stress level, and don't let yourself get overwhelmed. (See Chapter 10 in your text for a detailed discussion of stress-management techniques.) List three strategies you'll use to help manage stress during your behavior change program.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Time pressure is an extremely common challenge for managing stress and for incorporating new behaviors such as physical activity into one's daily routine. If time management is a problem for you, complete Activity 10 in the Behavior Change Workbook.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Practice positive, realistic self-talk (see Chapter 10 in your text and Activity 11 in the Behavior Change Workbook).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give yourself the rewards you named in your contract as well as plenty of self-praise. For more on rewards, refer to Chapter 1 in your text and Activity 6 in the Behavior Change Workbook.

**LAB AI-4** (continued)

\_\_\_\_\_ Involve the people around you. Find a buddy to work with you on change and/or find a role model who has already made the change you are working toward and who can provide both inspiration and practical advice.

Buddy: \_\_\_\_\_

Role model: \_\_\_\_\_

If you find that the people around you are sabotaging your efforts—offering you cigarettes or junk food, for example—talk with them about how they can support your behavior change plan. List the people you’ve spoken with and describe their target involvement in your program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(For a more detailed look at the role of others in your behavior change program, complete Activity 12 in the Behavior Change Workbook.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Keep a positive attitude about yourself and the change you are attempting. Don’t get discouraged—the action stage typically lasts for at least several months.

**Maintenance**

Continue with all the positive strategies you used in the action stage.

\_\_\_\_\_ Continue to monitor your behavior with a journal.

\_\_\_\_\_ Continue to monitor your environment.

\_\_\_\_\_ Continue to practice realistic self-talk. Identify yourself in terms of your new behavior: “I am a nonsmoker,” or “I am a walker.”

\_\_\_\_\_ Guard against slips, but don’t let a slip set you back. Be prepared for complications. List three complications you expect to run into and a strategy for overcoming the problem and getting your program back on track. For example, if you expect to have trouble maintaining your walking program during finals, plan ahead to take two 15-minute walks as study breaks each day.

Complication

Strategy

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_ Help someone else make the change that you have just made.

Person to help: \_\_\_\_\_

For additional strategies for maintaining your behavior change program, complete Activity 15 in the Behavior Change Workbook in your text.

## **LAB AI-4** (continued)

### **Termination**

If you complete the previous five stages and are no longer tempted to lapse back to your target behavior, you are in the termination stage. You have a new self-image, a positive feeling of self-efficacy, and a healthier lifestyle.

For more on the stages of change model and many additional practical strategies, see the text *Changing for Good*, by James Prochaska, John Norcross, and Carlo DiClemente (Avon Books).

For additional general information and strategies for behavior change, complete all the activities in the Behavior Change Workbook that appears at the end of your text and at the *Fit and Well* Online Learning Center (<http://www.mhhe.com/fahey>).