

Behaviour Change and Motivational Interviewing

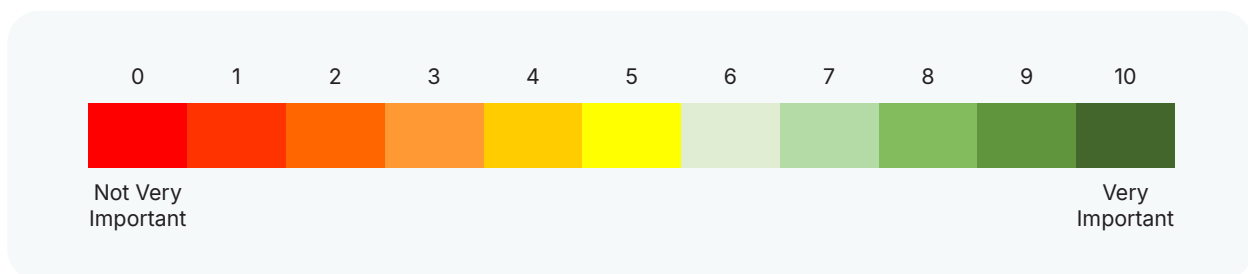
Behaviour Change

As health care providers, we know that health behaviour change is difficult for both patients and practitioners.

Traditional interventions have been ineffective as the approach that is often taken is focused on what the practitioner feels the patient needs to change and not on what the patient desires or considers to be most important.

A person-centered care approach has been shown to be more effective for positive and sustainable behaviour change and self-care. Focusing on the individual's strengths is also consistent with strengths-based care that benefits patients and families (Gottlieb, 2013).

The transtheoretical model (TTM) of change (DiClemente & Prochaska, 1998) has been studied for over 20 years as an important framework for changing health behaviour initially applied in the area of smoking cessation. The stages of change consist of five categories along a continuum that reflect a patient's readiness to change. The five stages of change include: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. Often a sixth category called "relapse" is also considered since even though behaviours can change, relapses may occur along the way. The premise of this TTM is the assessment of an individual's readiness for change. We can assess readiness to change by determining where on the "readiness ruler" an individual may be in changing an unhealthy behaviour.



Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a collaborative conversation style used with patients to draw out and strengthen their motivation and commitment to change. The core skills can be learned by anyone interested in supporting others to make change. There is a three-question interview that has been used:

1. What worries you most about your condition?
2. What would you most like to change? and
3. How do you think you might do that? It is particularly useful for those who have the opportunity to engage with patients who are facing complex situations, ambivalence, or multiple concerns (CCMI).

Motivational interviewing may be familiar to many of you and may also be a new concept for others. It generally takes many months of training to become proficient at this type of collaborative technique. It is probably most challenging for those of us who have been in clinical practice for many years! Expertise in this area can be found across Canada and around the world.