

Communication Guidelines to Promote Health Behavior Change

ASK PERMISSION

Would you be willing to spend a few minutes discussing your weight?
Would you like to talk about different ways to exercise and eat?

SHARE BMI (OPTIONAL)

Your BMI is at the 92nd percentile.
The target BMI for someone your age is less than the 85th %ile.
Ask for the patient's interpretation: "What does this mean to you?"
Add your own interpretation or advice as needed **after** eliciting the patient's/parent's response.

OVERWEIGHT SENSITIVITY "Do no harm"	
Obesity	➡ Overweight
Ideal Weight	➡ Healthier Weight
Personal Improvement	➡ Family Improvement
Focus on Weight	➡ Focus on Lifestyle
Diets or "Bad Foods"	➡ Healthier Food Choices

OFFER OPTIONS

There are a number of ways to achieve a healthy weight.

- ❖ Exercise and be physically active
- ❖ Eat 5 helpings of fruits and vegetables a day
- ❖ Cut back on TV, video games, and computer time
- ❖ Cut down on soda, juice, and sports drinks

Is there any one of these you'd like to discuss further today? Or perhaps you have another idea that I didn't mention?

ASSESS READINESS

On a scale of 0 to 10, how ready are you to consider [option chosen above].

Straight question: Why a 5?

Backward question: Why a 5 and not a 3?"

Forward question: What would it take to move you from a 5 to a 7?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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EXPLORE AMBIVALENCE

Step 1: Ask a pair of questions to help the patient explore the pros and cons of the issue.

- ❖ What are the things you think are important about or that you like about _____?
- ❖ What are the problems, or things, you don't like about _____?

Step 2: Summarize ambivalence

- ❖ Ask: Did I get it all? or Did I get it right?

TAILOR THE INTERVENTION

STAGE OF READINESS	KEY QUESTIONS
NOT READY 0-3 • Raise Awareness • Elicit Change Talk • Advise and Encourage	• Would you be interested in knowing more about reaching a healthy weight? • How can I help? • What needs to be different for you to consider making a change in the future?
UNSURE 4-6 • Evaluate Ambivalence • Elicit Change Talk • Build Readiness	• Where does that leave you now? • What do you see as your next steps? • What are you thinking/feeling at this point? • Where does _____ fit into your future?
READY 7-10 • Strengthen Commitment • Elicit Change Talk • Facilitate Action Planning	• Why is this important to you now? • What are your ideas for making this work? • What might get in the way? How can you deal with that? • How might you reward yourself along the way?

CLOSE

Summarize

Show appreciation. Acknowledge willingness to discuss change.

Offer advice, emphasize choice, establish realistic goals, and express confidence.

Confirm next steps and arrange for follow-up.