

Practice: Assessing Stage of Readiness for Change

Case Study #1 - Malcolm

Malcolm has come to you looking for some help with quitting smoking. He is 50 years old and has been smoking for over 40 years. He started at age 8 when he would light cigarettes for his mother; he smoked 2 packs a day of Newports until about 5 years ago when he cut back to a pack a day because he wasn't able to afford smoking more. He is married with a 13 year old daughter.

Finances are tight. He works night shift and can sometimes get overtime but it is not always enough. He finds the job somewhat boring and taking smoking breaks is the best part of the shift. When he gets home he needs to have a few beers before he can sleep since it is daytime.

He had a recent visit to the emergency room for severe abdominal pain, possibly from an ulcer. He also has some shortness of breath and according with his last blood test, his liver is starting to fail. The doctor has told him he needs to stop drinking and smoking. Turning 50 and the ER visit have motivated him to cut down on his smoking and he thinks it might be time to stop before his breathing gets worse. Since he cut back on smoking, he has saved some money too. He does not think his alcohol is a problem and believes he really needs it to help him sleep after work.

What is Malcom's Stage of Change with respect to his tobacco use?

- a. Precontemplation
- b. Contemplation
- c. Preparation
- d. Action

What indicates this stage?

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Study #2 – Sherline

Sherline is 20 years old. She and her 3 year old daughter live with her mother. Sherline is unemployed. Since the apartment building went smoke free she is really trying to only smoke outside. Fortunately her mother can stay with the 3 year old when she goes out to smoke. She does not really mind going outside (if it is not too cold) because it gives her a break.

Her mother has been nagging her to quit smoking. She thinks Sherline spends too much money on cigarettes, about \$40/week, money she could spend on her daughter's food or clothes. Her mother also hates the smell on her clothes. And she is starting to complain about how much she has to babysit when Sherline goes out to smoke. She told Sherline that her daughter picked up a stick from the park and put it in her mouth, like smoking a cigarette, "like mommy"

Sherline quit when she was pregnant with her daughter. It did not take long before she was back to at least ½ pack per day. Sometimes she re-lights her cigarettes to save money. She knows she should quit again but she is feeling very stressed about not being able to find a job and not sure if she can do it.

What is Sherline's Stage of Change?

- a. Precontemplation
- b. Contemplation
- c. Preparation
- d. Action

What indicates this stage?

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Case Study #3 - Jorge

Jorge is 19 years old and just started taking a class at the community college. He has a part time job and lives at home with his mother, father and two younger brothers. He has been smoking since he was 17 and currently smokes about 10 cigarettes a day on most days. He does not always have the money to buy cigarettes but there is usually someone he can borrow from. Mostly he likes to smoke when he is drinking with his friends. He also smokes pot. Lately the drinking and using pot has been getting more frequent and he recently had a big fight with his father about this.

He is starting to think the pot use is getting out of hand and is trying to cut down. He likes school and wants to do well, even though he knows it will take him a long time to finish, and smoking pot is not helping him. He does not really think smoking cigarettes is a problem though because he does not smoke that much and some days it is only one or two. His new girlfriend wants him to stop drinking and smoking (cigarettes and pot).

What is the Jorge's Stage of Change?

- a. Precontemplation
- b. Contemplation
- c. Preparation
- d. Action

What indicates this stage?

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Case Study #4 - Ashley

Ashley has just returned home from an in-patient substance abuse treatment program. She has been clean and sober for 10 months from marijuana and alcohol. She is still in out-patient treatment and is determined to stay clean this time. Ashley's smoking has increased since she went to the in-patient treatment program, she now smokes about 30 cigarettes per day. She is single and her two children, a 10 year old girl and 7 year old son, have just moved back in with her.

Her counselor is an ex-smoker and is encouraging her to quit smoking. She states that she has several good reasons to stop smoking, including her kids' concern and her desire to be more active. She used to play sports when she was younger, but gave them up during her years of alcohol and drug addiction. She also wants to quit because she is not working and smoking can't afford the cigarettes anymore. On the other hand, she has already tried quitting and failed three times. She wants to stop, but she is scared, dreads the weight gain and withdrawal, and without smoking she wouldn't be herself. She feels like she is already doing a lot in her life. She says, "Quitting seems like too much trouble, but I do want to stop".

What is Ashley's Stage of Change?

- a. Precontemplation
- b. Contemplation
- c. Preparation
- d. Action

What indicates this stage?