

Using the Readiness Ruler

When discussing lifestyle with an individual, there are two main questions that provide a lot of information about 'readiness' for change. Ask the individual:

1. How **important** is it for you to make a change?
2. How **confident** do you feel that you can make changes to your lifestyle?

Ask individuals to indicate their best answer to each question (remember they may be at different stages of readiness to change for each lifestyle behaviour you may discuss).

Use the 1–10 scale to help you quantify 'readiness', whereby lower numbers on the **importance scale** represent fewer thoughts about change and higher numbers represent specific plans to change.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Pre-contemplators
Few thoughts
about change

Contemplators

Specific plans
to change

Explore their response.

Importance

Ask what factors made them choose their score and what would help increase their score. This highlights potential obstacles to change. You can discuss these with the individual and help them to consider ways of overcoming these barriers.

Focus as well on why the score was not lower. This brings out the positive aspects of the person's thoughts about their importance and confidence as regards weight management.

Confidence

Sometimes a person scores higher in importance but lower in confidence. The **confidence scale** helps to measure the person's belief in their ability to comply with the changes required to have a healthier lifestyle. A low score requires further discussion. It may be due to a lack of 'weight loss skills' and the patient may need more support in developing a plan of action. Alternatively, you may find that the person is not confident because they have other priorities in their lives at the moment and feel unable to commit to lifestyle behaviour change.

This is not a fixed numerical assessment but a tool to quickly identify readiness.