

# 3 Steps of Brief Intervention

Using TTM and MI

1. **Decisional Balance** to open discussion and **explore ambivalence**
2. **Readiness Ruler** to **identify stage of change**
3. **Brief Discussion** targeting stage of change to **elicit change talk**:
  - **Pre-contemplative**: ask about negative consequences, respect autonomy, offer follow up
  - **Contemplative**: reflect lower/higher on readiness ruler, explore 'what if' plan, offer follow up
  - **Preparation/Action**: affirm decision to change, develop plan, identify resources and offer follow up

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## Step 1: Decisional Balance

“So, what do you like about [current behavior] \_\_\_\_?”

“What do you not like about [current behavior] \_\_\_\_?”

Summary of pros and cons

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## Step 2: Readiness Ruler



Score	Readiness	Stage of Change	Focus of Intervention
0-3	Not Ready	Pre-Contemplation	Engage: raise awareness of problem
4-7	Ambivalent	Contemplation	Explore: heighten discrepancy
8-10	Ready	Preparation / Action	Plan for change / Sustain change

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## Step 3: Pre-Contemplation Brief Discussion

Readiness Scores 0 - 3			
Elicit patient's perceived negative consequences	Express concern	Offer information	Support and follow-up
What's happened as a result of your drinking that you later regretted?	You were embarrassed by that. I am concerned that your drinking may be contributing to your anxiety rather than helping it.	Would you like more information about how alcohol may be impacting your health?	I respect that you aren't ready to talk about your drinking more right now. Thanks for sharing what you have today. I will plan to ask you about it at our next appointment if that's ok.
I forgot it was my turn to drive for carpool last week and that was embarrassing.		No, I don't have time to talk about this now. It's really not a big deal anyways.	



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## Step 3: Contemplation Brief Discussion

Readiness Scores 4-7	
Explore motivation to change	Explore a tentative change plan for when patient is ready and offer follow up
Why a [patient-stated number] and not a [lower number]?	With that in mind, what do you think a change would look like when you are ready to cut back or stop?
I really shouldn't forget to do things – I hate it when I do that. So maybe I should slow down some.	I think I could work on not drinking during the week. Maybe stick to the weekends only.
What would have to happen for you to go from a [patient-stated number] to a [higher number]?	That sounds like a good idea. How would you feel about me checking in with you about this the next time we see each other?
I guess if it became a problem with work, I mean besides the carpool.	That sounds fine to me.
So you don't like forgetting things and you'd definitely make a change if your drinking started interfering with work.	

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## Step 3: Preparation/Action Brief Discussion

Readiness Scores 8-10		
Affirm patient's decision to change	Help patient develop action plan	Identify resources and offer follow up
You're ready to make this change. That's a great decision for your health	Let's identify the steps you can take to help you cut back. What do you see as a first step?	What people or groups in your life could help you while you work to cut back?
I really am ready to cut back – I don't want to live this way anymore. I'm tired of it.	I guess I could start by drinking only once during the week and on weekends. Then I could work toward making sure I don't drink more than one bottle of wine per week.	My book club would be helpful – they are all really supportive, and I know they would be there for me.
		Offer follow up on plan progress in 4 to 6 weeks.



Your last patient of the day is a 38 yo 'soccer mom' here for her well woman exam. She screened positive for excessive alcohol use on the annual wellness form she completed online prior to her visit, which you review with her after confirming she has no current complaints for this visit and her benign health history is unchanged.

In discussing her drinking, using the decisional balance, she states that she likes drinking because it helps her relax and it's just what her friends do when they get together. She dislikes that her drinking picked up during the pandemic and when she recently overheard her children, now teen and pre-teen, use the term 'wine mom' with their friends.

She says she is a 5 on the readiness ruler. Your next step is to ask:

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A. "What negative consequences have you had because of your drinking, if any?"

B. "Why are you a 5 and not a 3?" "What would have to happen for you to be an 8?"

C. "How do you plan to quit drinking tomorrow?"

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D. "Did you know drinking alcohol increases your breast cancer risk?"