

Goal Setting Invitation: *Sample Scripts for Clinicians*

The following sample situations and scripts offer 4 natural openings to integrate an invitation to health behaviour change with your patients.

Behavior Change Invitation #1: *The Classic*

Use the *Health & Resilience Pre-Questionnaire* results to invite a health change.

Sample invitation: *“Based on your answers on the Health and Resilience Questionnaire, it looks like you feel there’s be some room to improve on your.... :*

- *physical activity OR*
- *staying connected to friends OR*
- *learning something new*

...Would you like to set a small goal to work on that?”

Behavior Change Invitation #2: *You’re Ideal!*

Use the presenting concern as the relevant springboard to invite a behavior change.

Sample Invitation: *“The _____ (pain/mobility/ med side effects/blood pressure/work stress/ depression/ anxiety/ insomnia/ addictions/ etc. that you are dealing with make you ideal for a health and wellness initiative that could help you with this issue. Would you like to hear about it?”*

Behavior Change Invite #3: *The 4 Seasons*

Use seasonality to invite or renew a relevant health goal.

Sample Invitation: *“Now that it’s _____ (Spring/Summer/Winter/Fall), let’s looks at your baseline to see how you feel you are doing in some key health areas. Would you like to set a goal to activate your health over _____ Winter/Summer/now that it’s Spring/as the colder weather approaches...?”*

Behavior Change Invite #4: *Transitions Points*

Use a life transition/developmental milestone or even a birthday as a springboard.

Sample Invitation: *“Now that you are caregiving/ retired/living alone/dealing with a new medical issue/facing these financial concerns/figuring out your life as a single parent/ moving into long term care/ divorcing...this would be a good time to check in on how you are feeling about some key health areas to help you stay as well as you can...Would you like to set a goal to help take care of yourself through this next phase?”*

Stoplight Scripts

Assessing Readiness for Health Change and Responding to Your Patient



Your patients will respond in different ways at different times to the invitation to behaviour change. Using the metaphor of a stop light, they might say: “No” (red light- unready), “Maybe” (yellow light- ambivalent), or “Yes” (green light—ready to go). The following outlines ways to respond to all of these situations.

Navigating a Red Light Response:

- Patient responses such as “No, Not ready, Can’t, Won’t” are perfectly fair and very common responses at any given visit! We can all be in a “red light” zone for healthy behaviour on any given day.
- **Simply inviting the health behaviour change is an intervention and gets people thinking.** Data shows that the invitation from a care provider is enough to trigger subsequent readiness.

Red Light- Clinician Responses:

- Acknowledge in a non-judgmental way and normalize the response with, “*Fair enough*” or “*I hear you!*”. The issue has been noted and can be talked about again at a subsequent visit. **It is not your job to make anyone do anything!**

Typical Yellow Light Responses:

- I would but... Maybe next month... I just don’t feel motivated but I know I should... If I weren’t _____(depressed/so anxious/dealing with this medical condition), then I would.... If I had time I would...

Yellow Light- Clinician Response:

- Empathize with the ambivalence and limitations mentioned. Normalize that health change is hard and that most of us struggle to make change happen.
- Invite one very small behavior change in a target health area. Choosing something that is meaningful to the patient can also help. For example, “*Even with the (time limitations/lack of motivation etc.)...would you consider setting one really small goal and just see how it goes? Is there a very small change you can think of that would still be meaningful to you? No goal is ever too small and if it doesn’t happen, no problem...*”

Even for a keen Green Light Patient- Clinician Response:

- Even for the enthusiasts, remember to keep the goal very small. Focus on concrete, or “S.M.A.R.T.” goals - **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-oriented, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-limited. The more specific and doable the goal is, the more likely the patient will succeed.