

BRAVE

How to sensitively discuss weight and health behaviours



Adults



Build relationships

Hear the patient talk, seek to understand and be empathetic towards the patient and their situation. Once the presenting concern is addressed:

“ How are you? Is there anything else you would like to discuss about your general health and wellbeing?



Raise respectfully

Introduce the topic of health behaviours and use weight-neutral, sensitive language. For example, focus on health, health behaviours or other factors that contribute to weight.

Scenario 1: Offer a safe and respectful space for open communication.

“ We know there are many factors that can make it hard to reach our health goals. Everyone deserves support and I'm happy to chat if there is anything you've been finding tricky. Is this something you would like to discuss today?

Scenario 2: Link to presenting health concerns where appropriate.

“ I can see that the blood test results have come as a surprise to you. One of the first things to consider is the role our wellbeing and health behaviours, such as [health behaviour¹] can play in managing [clinical concern²]. Would it be okay if we spoke about this further?

Scenario 3: Some individuals may prefer a direct focus on weight. If the individual raises weight as their primary concern, mirror their language and gain consent to continue the conversation.

“ Would you like to talk about the different and sometimes complex factors that can contribute to [weight]? Do you have any preferred terminology when talking about weight?

¹ **Health behaviours** that could be highlighted here include nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress, social and environmental factors.

² **Clinical concerns** that could be highlighted here include blood glucose levels, cholesterol, liver health.



Ask about attitudes

Ask the individual about their attitudes and motivations towards health behaviours.

“ What does maintaining your overall health and wellbeing mean to you?

“ What areas of your health or wellbeing are most important to you?

“ What motivates you towards better health?

“ What has been your experience with making improvements to your health and wellbeing in the past?

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Validate values

Validate the patient's viewpoint and acknowledge their stage of change. Relay understanding through paraphrasing, being empathetic, avoiding judgement and incorporating positive language.



Precontemplation

If the individual has not raised health concerns or is reluctant to discuss aspects of their health and wellbeing.



Do you feel that your motivation to **[motivations³]** would help you make positive health changes?



I understand you have competing priorities at the moment. I can help you make small changes that may have big impacts on your health if you would like to chat further at your next appointment.

Contemplation

If the individual is ready to discuss or change health behaviours, use exploratory, open-ended questions.



I can see that **[health behaviour¹/clinical concern²]** is important to you and an area you would like to improve."



It's great you have made attempts to support your health in the past. I know it can be hard to stick with changes over time. Do you want to talk about what has or hasn't worked in the past, or ways we could support you to help maintain these positive changes?

³ **Motivations** examples that could be highlighted here include 'have energy for your children/grandchildren', 'continue working', or 'travel and see family and friends'.



Engage and enable

Co-create next steps together through educating and enabling the patient. Consider using a SMART goal setting template or build an automated template into your clinical software.



It is up to you if and how you would like to make changes to **[health behaviour¹]**. Feel free to make a future appointment. I am here to support you when you are ready.



It would be great to talk about a small goal that you could work towards such as **[action⁴]**, or alternatively, here are some **[programs or resources⁵]** that can provide you with further support or get you started.

⁴ **Actions** will be personalised on individual circumstances. Examples may relate to moving more, improving sleep, reducing alcohol, increasing water intake, increasing vegetable intake, connecting socially.

⁵ Refer to evidence-based **programs or resources**. Use local directories or head to Clinicians Hub for [free statewide referral pathways](#) and [resources](#).