

Understanding your clients' readiness for change

In his coaching series for CAM practitioners dedicated to “the difference that makes the difference”, NLP coach **Mark Shields**, director of the Life Practice Group, explains the STEAR Model – a model to help you understand where your client sits on the change scale.

It is a fact that with programmes that involve three sessions or more, 50% of clients fail to see it through to the end. This causes frustration for the practitioner and disappointment for the client.

The STEAR model provides a structure for a series of questions for the practitioner to ask the client that will help you judge where each client is in relation to making the change they say they want.

Having this information is vital, as it helps you set achievable goals, understand the client and help get the client where they need to be to make the appropriate change.

This can also be thought of in terms of the NLP concept of Pacing. Rather than trying to get the client to fit into your programme's set schedule, you can lead

the client into the change arena at a pace and speed that meets the client's needs and requirements, at the same time achieving the change the client wants.

The keys

There are a number of key factors that can help.

- Recognising if the client is ready for the change they desire and where they are on the scale of being ready to make the change they say they desire.
- Use of “change eliciting” questions to get the client to talk about their current situation, why they want to change and what the change will mean to them in the future.
- Use of the scale of discomfort (SOD) to measure whether a client is ready for change or not. Using a scale of 1 to 10, the nearer to ten the client rates his or herself the more ready to change.
- Using the Life Practice Model STEAR © to complete some self-analysis and diagnostics with the client.



STEAR stands for:

S	Situation
T	Task
E	Expectation
A	Action
R	Results

Situation This ascertains the client's current situation and whether they can they continue in the same way.

Task Is the client aware of the changes that need to be made to achieve the results they desire?

Expectation We can often use SMART again here. Are the client's expectations of change specific, realistic and achievable with timescales?

Action Does the client understand the levels of action required to make the appropriate change and if so are they able to do so?

Results Has the client visualised what the impact of these changes will mean and are they ready to cope with the outcome of the action they will be taking?

Using STEAR you simply ask them to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being completely ready for change and 1 being not ready, over these five areas. Totalling up the score will give you a good starting point.

Using a set of open and relevant questions will help you reach a decision and if you combine these questions with the SOD scale it will give you a good idea of where the client sits on the “ready to change scale”.

Scoring Indicators

- Up to 15 = Not ready for change
- 15-25 = Ready to begin considering change
- 25-35 = Ready to begin to change
- 35+ = Ready for change

This is just to help you as a practitioner decide where you client is on their journey of personal change.

You can then develop the conversation further by using clever open questions to ascertain your client's situation further; after all, the more information you have on your client's readiness to change. the more effective you will be in affecting that change with the client.

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