

## **BACKGROUND**

### **REAP**

### **Readiness to Engage in “Advance Care Planning”**

Traditionally, investigators in health behavior change utilize univariate measures to assess the efficacy of an intervention. These measures have surface validity but can be restricted by poor statistical power, imprecise definitions, and lack of depth in describing some aspects of the problem. Furthermore, such paradigms posit that human behavior change occurs quickly and dichotomously. (1) The transtheoretical model of Prochaska and Diclemente (2-5) offers an alternative mechanism to assess readiness to change. It postulates four clear, well-defined, stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance.

Since its introduction in the early 1980's, the transtheoretical model or “Stages of Change” has been widely utilized to understand and assess behavioral “readiness to change” across various health care issues such as: smoking cessation (6), regular exercise (7), illicit drug addiction (8), and treatment compliance (9). The model has also been applied to assess health care readiness to change in different populations (10-13). Related investigations have developed specific interventions targeted for each stage and assessed the results (14,15).

The process of advance care planning (ACP) is similar to other health related behaviors, actions, or activities. Engagement with the process runs the gamut of readiness stages, from pre-contemplation to full endorsement and maintenance. It involves both awareness of and valuing the prospective activity, considering options or preparing for action, completing an advance care plan, and regular review and maintenance of the ACP. REAP is an assessment instrument designed to determine the readiness of an individual to participate in advance care planning. Our (Foti, Hanrahan) expectation is that like other “Stages of Change” assessments, it will determine a person or group's proportionate placement among the stages. Interventions targeted for the appropriate level of readiness will move individuals and groups toward the successful completion of advance care plans.

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