

Making changes, especially when it comes to improving your health, can be really hard. You may have a lot going on and it can be difficult to know where to start. If you're thinking about making changes, there's a tool that can help you decide where to start. It's called an agenda mapping bubble sheet. It helps you figure out where to start making changes by:

- Writing down all the changes you would like to make
- Assessing which changes are the most important to you, and
- Deciding which change to start with

So how does this tool work? Let's look at an example.

Meet Paula. She's a 45-year-old woman who wants to make some changes to improve her health, but she's not really sure where to start. Let's find out what's going on with Paula and what she wants to change. We can help her get started by making a list of things she's concerned about.

- Paula has been smoking for the past 20 years. She recently cut down from 20 cigarettes a day to 5, but she is finding it hard to quit those last few cigarettes. It's really important to her to stop smoking for good.
- Paula works as an administrator at a medical office that is short-staffed, which means that she is taking on extra work. She feels really stressed from the workload and it's keeping her up at night. She wants to find ways to cope with stress.
- Paula drinks a glass of wine almost every day to unwind after work, and about 5 glasses on Saturday evenings when she's with friends. She really enjoys drinking with her friends but doesn't always feel so great the next morning. She wishes she had more energy on Sundays so she could prepare better for the week ahead.
- Paula wants to increase her daily movement but she doesn't really have much time or energy. She commutes to work by bus, sits for most of the day at her desk, and when she gets home, she relaxes on the couch with a glass of wine to watch TV.

Now that we know about Paula's priorities, we can start to fill out her agenda mapping bubble sheet.

- Paula wants to quit her last few cigarettes for good.
- Paula want to learn ways to cope with stress.
- Paula doesn't like how drinking alcohol makes her feel and is interested in making some changes.
- Paula wants to be more active but isn't really sure how she can find the time or energy.

Agenda Mapping Transcript

Now that we have filled out Paula's bubble sheet, let's help her decide where she could start making changes. There are several ways to do this. A first step is to look at all the bubbled items to see if there are any connections. For example, stress is an issue Paula identified. Learning ways to cope can help her manage stress at work, and might also help to reduce her drinking and smoking. Paula also said that physical activity is important to her and being more active can be another way to reduce stress.

Seeing these connections can help Paula understand that making a change in one area can actually help other areas of her life. It could also help her figure out where to start. Let's look at how this process might work.

Paula has already done a lot of work to try and quit smoking so it's really important to her that she quits for good. If she decides that her priority is to quit smoking, the strategies she uses can help with other areas she identified in her bubble sheet. For example, instead of going on smoke breaks at work, Paula could:

- Use those break times to go for a 10-minute walk to increase her daily movement and ease her stress.
- Or she could use those breaks to try a 10-minute meditation in a quiet place. This activity is another way to cope with stress.

As you can see from this example with Paula, small changes in one area often lead to changes in another. If you are thinking about making changes to improve your health, consider using the agenda mapping bubble sheet. It can help you figure out what changes are the most important to you so that you can begin working on them. If you find it difficult to choose where to start, pick something that you think might be easiest and try it out. There is no wrong place to start when it comes to making changes to improve your health.