

# Physical Activity and Scleroderma: Small Shifts to Lasting Change

Amanda Wurz, PhD, Assistant Professor,  
University of the Fraser Valley

# Session Goals

- Learn about and practice physical activity
- Understand what behaviour change is and why it's so hard
- Reflect on a personally important physical activity goal
- Practice setting yourself up for sustainable change



# What to Expect

## Content


1. Physical activity (and practice)
2. Behaviour change science
3. Personal reflection (identify what matters to you and plan for success)
4. Additional strategies to support lasting change

This workshop is **interactive!** I encourage you to reflect on your goals, share with others (if you want), and participate at your comfort level

# Physical Activity

- Physical activity is any bodily movement produced by your muscles that uses energy
  - Everyday activities
  - Planned exercise

# Why Physical Activity Matters

- Helps maintain flexibility, mobility, strength, and physical function
  - Supports energy levels and mood
  - Offers a sense of structure, control, and confidence
- 

# General Physical Activity Recommendations



150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week (or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week)

# Intensity



0

1

2

3

4

5-6

7

8-9

10

Nothing

Very  
light

Light

Moderate

Somewhat  
Hard

Hard

Really  
Hard

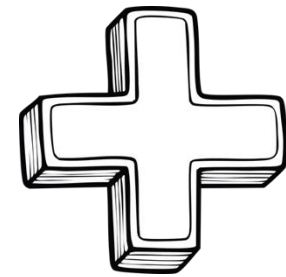
Really, Really  
Hard

Maximal

# General Physical Activity Recommendations



150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week (or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week)



Strengthening exercise involving major muscle groups  $\geq$  2 days per week

***Move More!!***

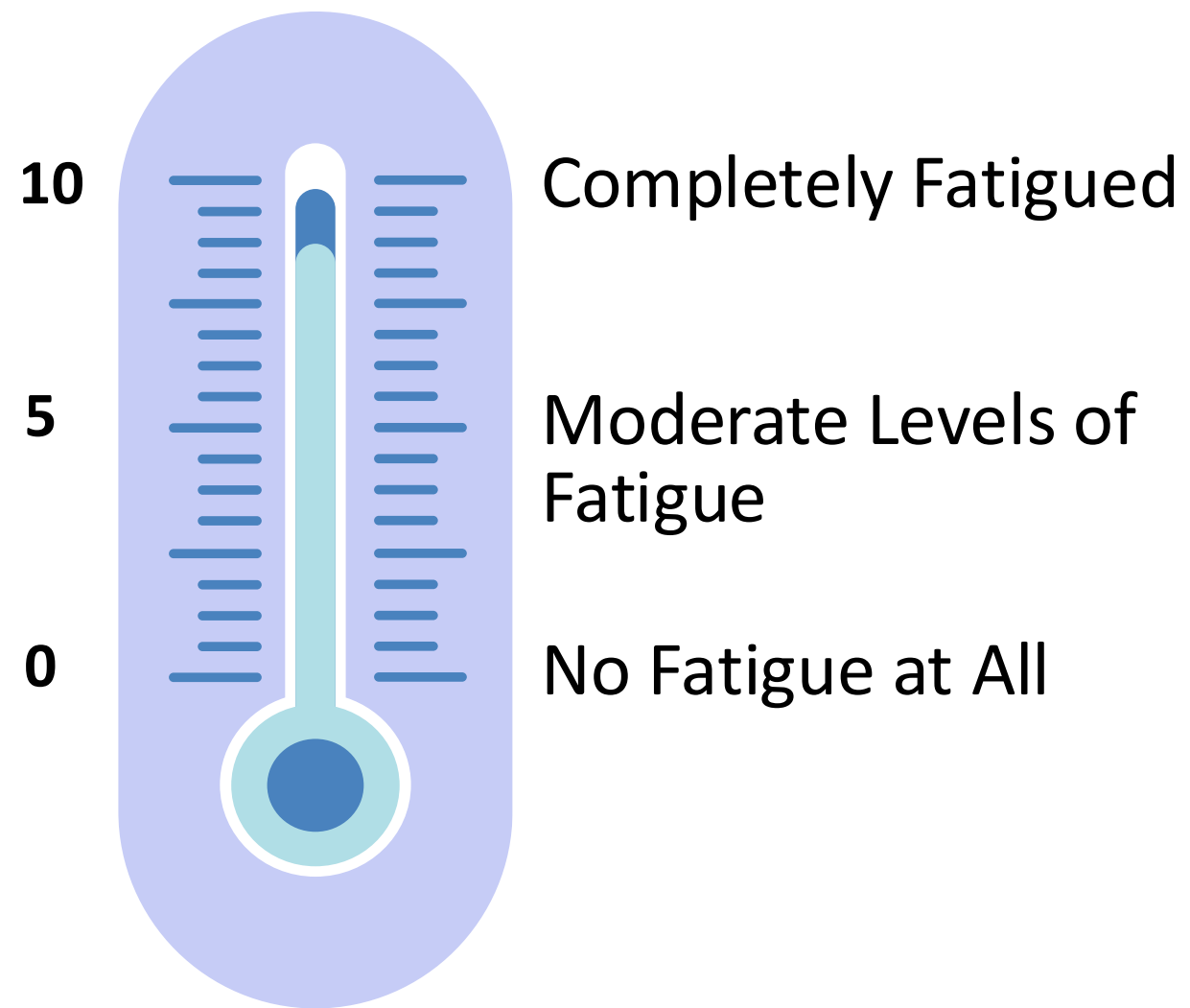
# Adapted Physical Activity Recommendations

## Move more!

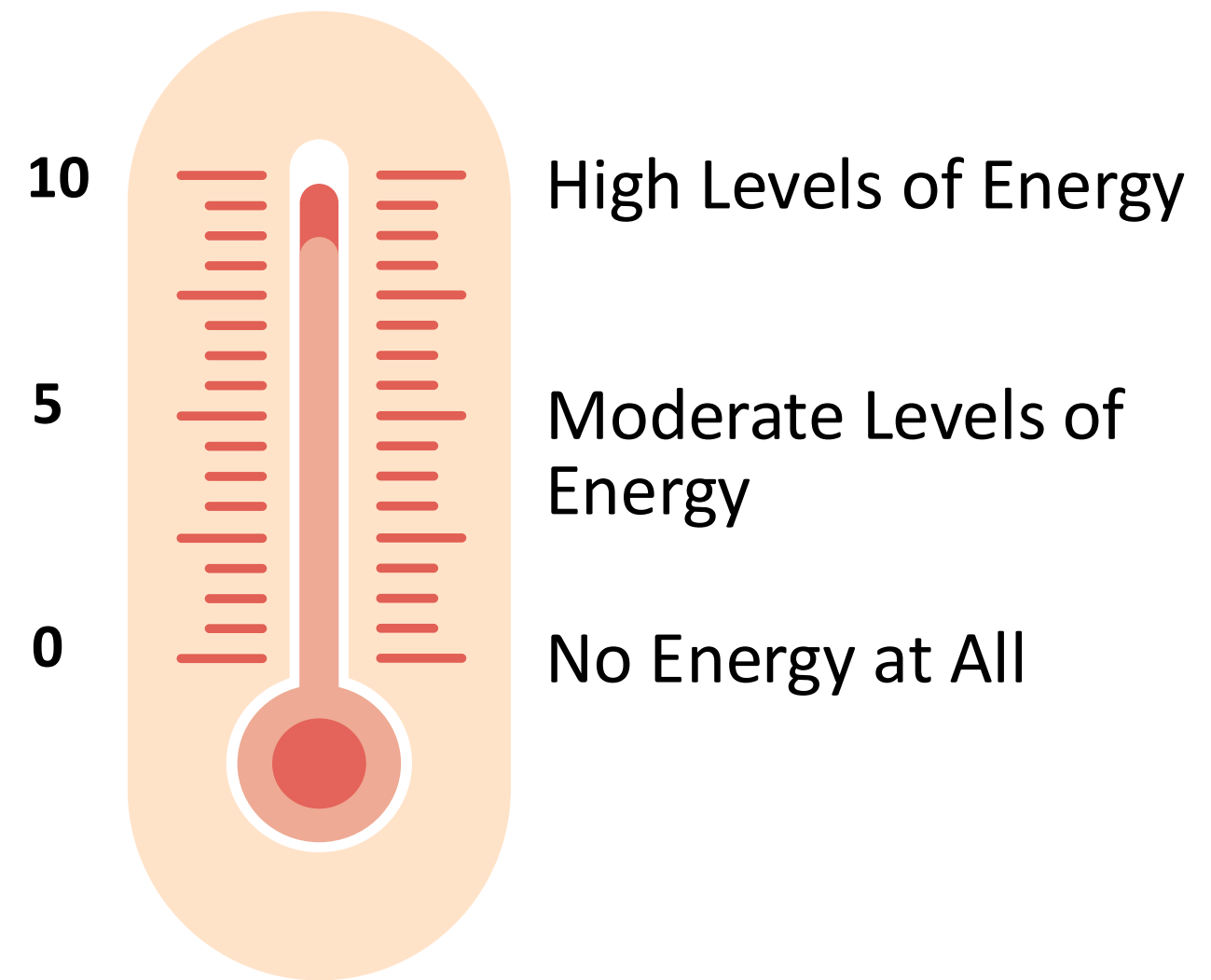
- Listen to your body and pace yourself

# “Temperature Check”

## Fatigue



## Energy



# Adapted Physical Activity Recommendations

## Move more!

- Listen to your body and pace yourself
- Start slow
  - Consider low intensity activities
  - Incorporate flexibility
- Build gradually
  - Include rest during and between sessions
- Monitor symptoms

# Movement Break



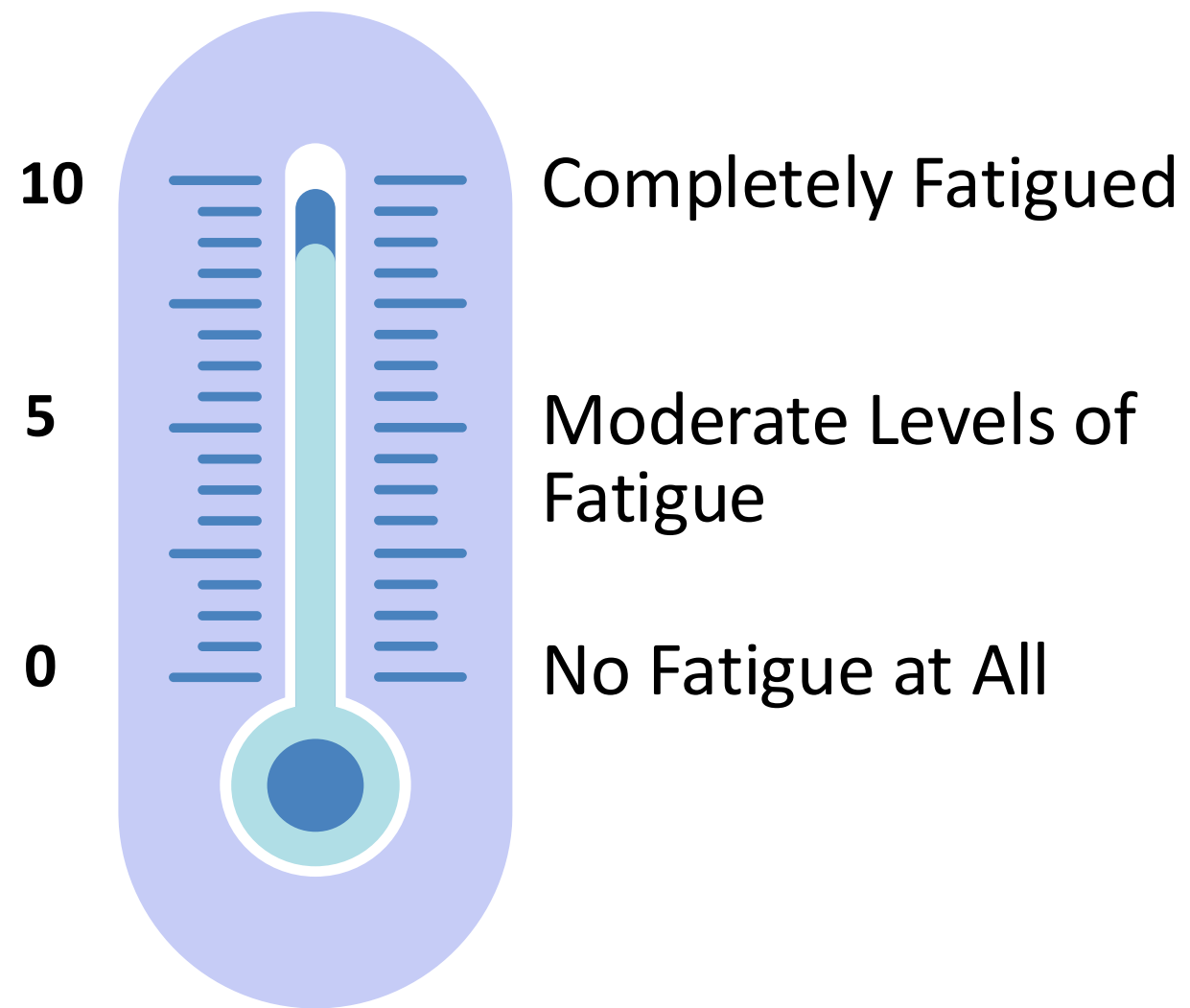
# Safety Notes

- Get Active Questionnaire
  - Listen to your body
  - ***STOP*** if you feel nauseous, lightheaded, short of breath, dizzy, or if you develop chest pain or any other sudden sharp pain in your muscles or joints

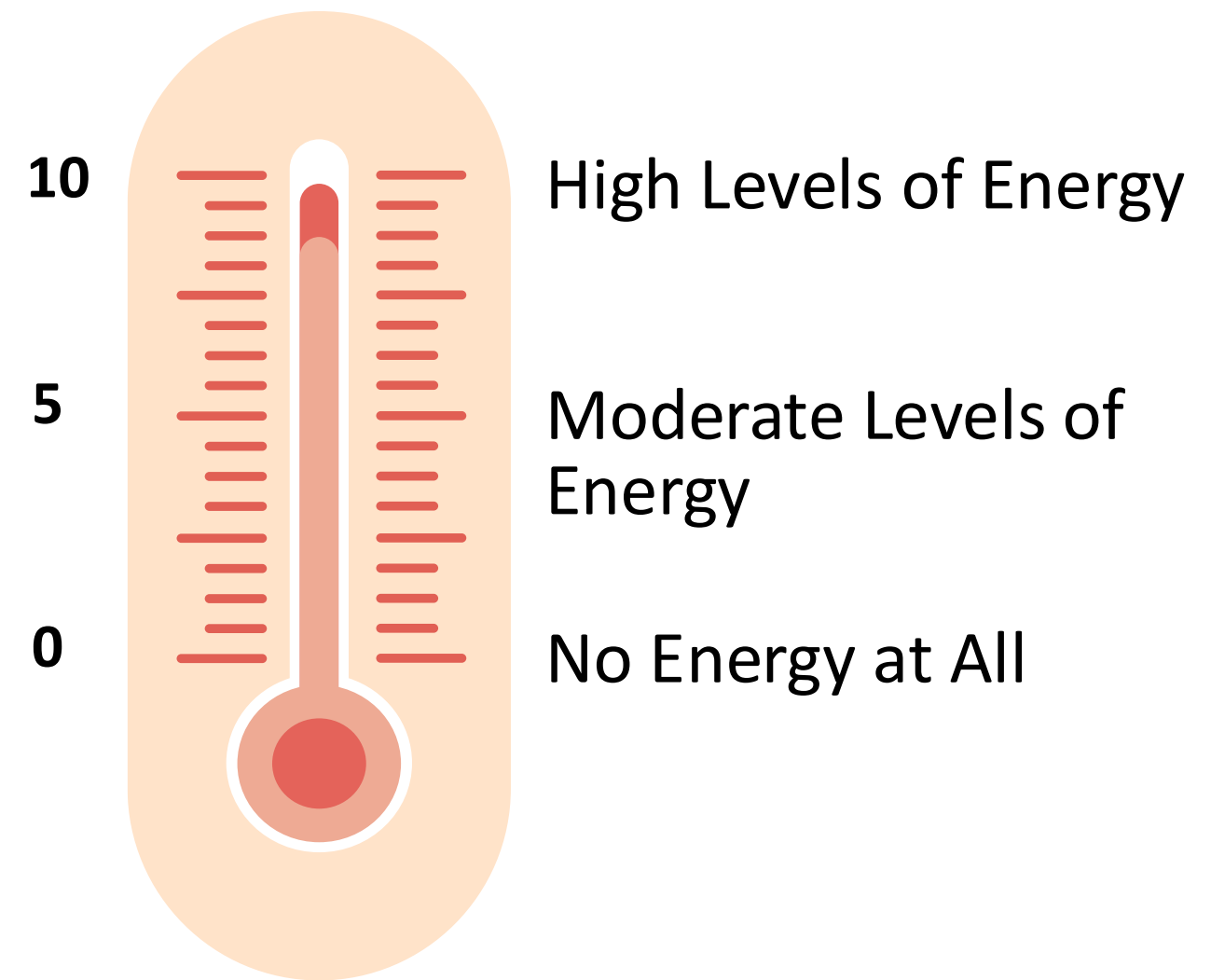


# “Temperature Check”

## Fatigue



## Energy



# Behaviour Change: What is it?

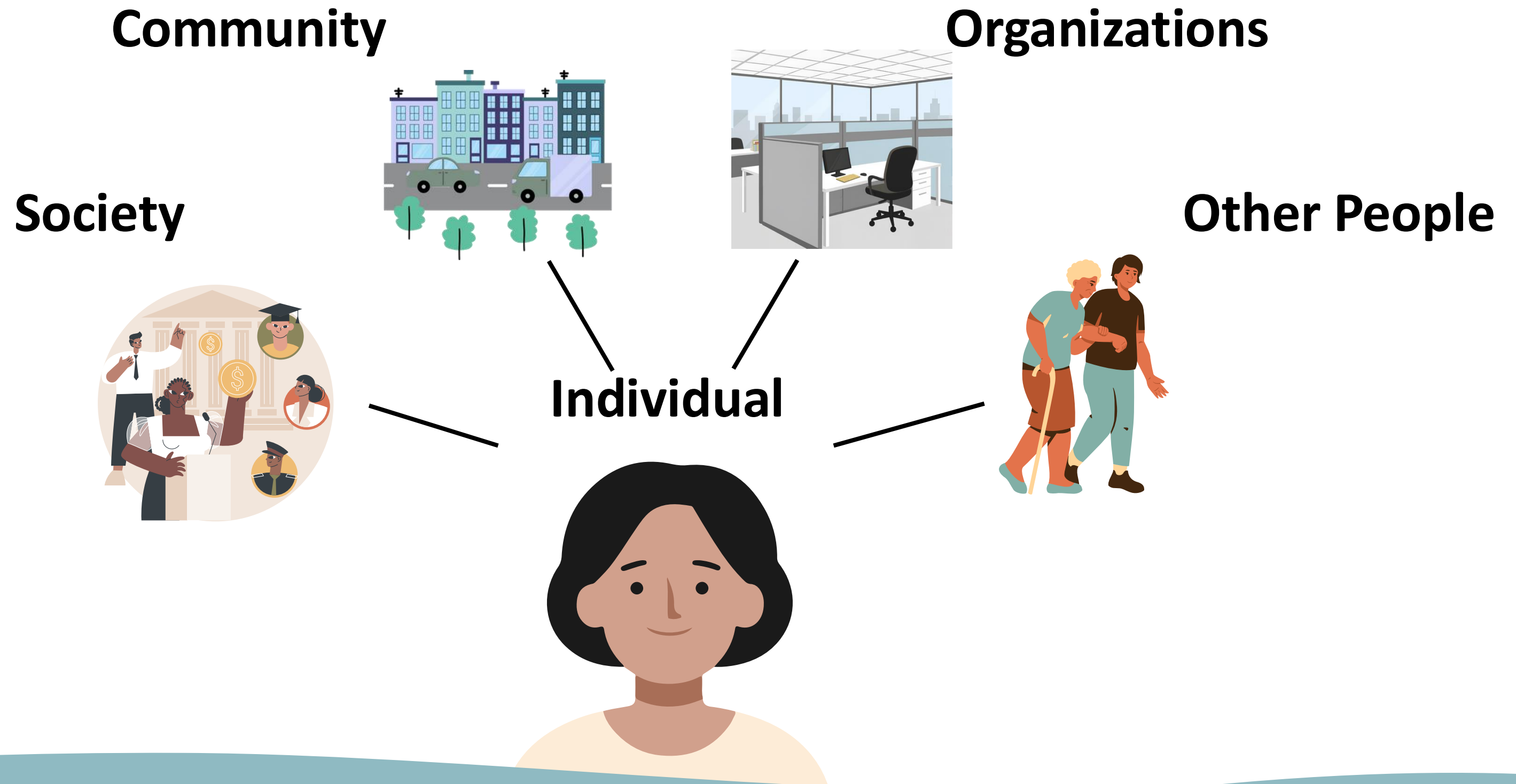
- Altering how we think, feel, and act
  - It takes a minimum of 12 weeks



# Reflect and Connect

- Even though many of us know the benefits of physical activity, changing our behaviour and *doing* it can be hard
  - **Why do you think this is the case?**
  - **What is it about physical activity that is “so hard”?**
  - **What makes it harder as a person living with scleroderma?**

# The Context



# The Path to Change

**Pre-contemplation**

**Contemplation**

**Preparation**

**Action**

**Maintenance**

**Termination**



# The Path to Change

**Pre-contemplation**

**Contemplation**

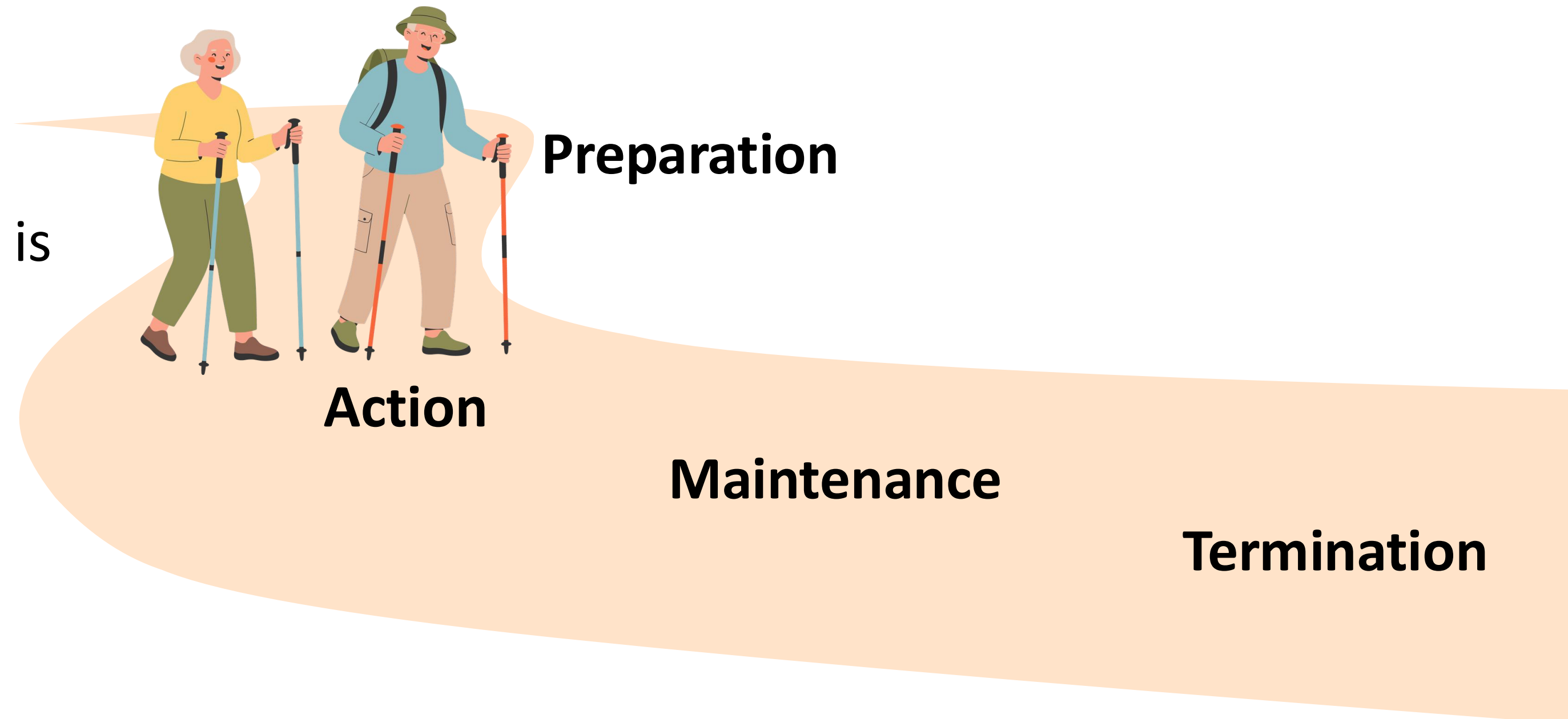
**Preparation**

**Action**

**Maintenance**

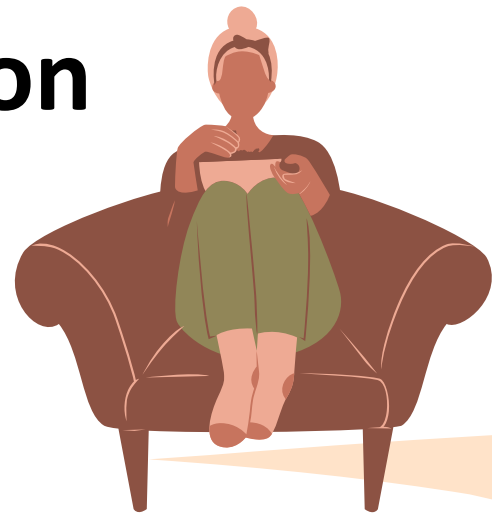
**Termination**

- The path to change is **not linear!**
- Individuals can go back and forth between stages



# Pre-contemplation

## Pre-contemplation



- No intention of changing behaviour

*Example: An individual who avoids physical activity altogether and believes being tired all the time is normal; they don't think exercise is safe or necessary*

# Contemplation

- Thinking about taking action within 6 months

## Contemplation

*Example: An individual's physician mentions that light physical activity might help improve energy levels and mood; the individual is starting to wonder if being more active could help, but still feels unsure*

# Preparation

- Intending to make changes in the next month; planning for behaviour change

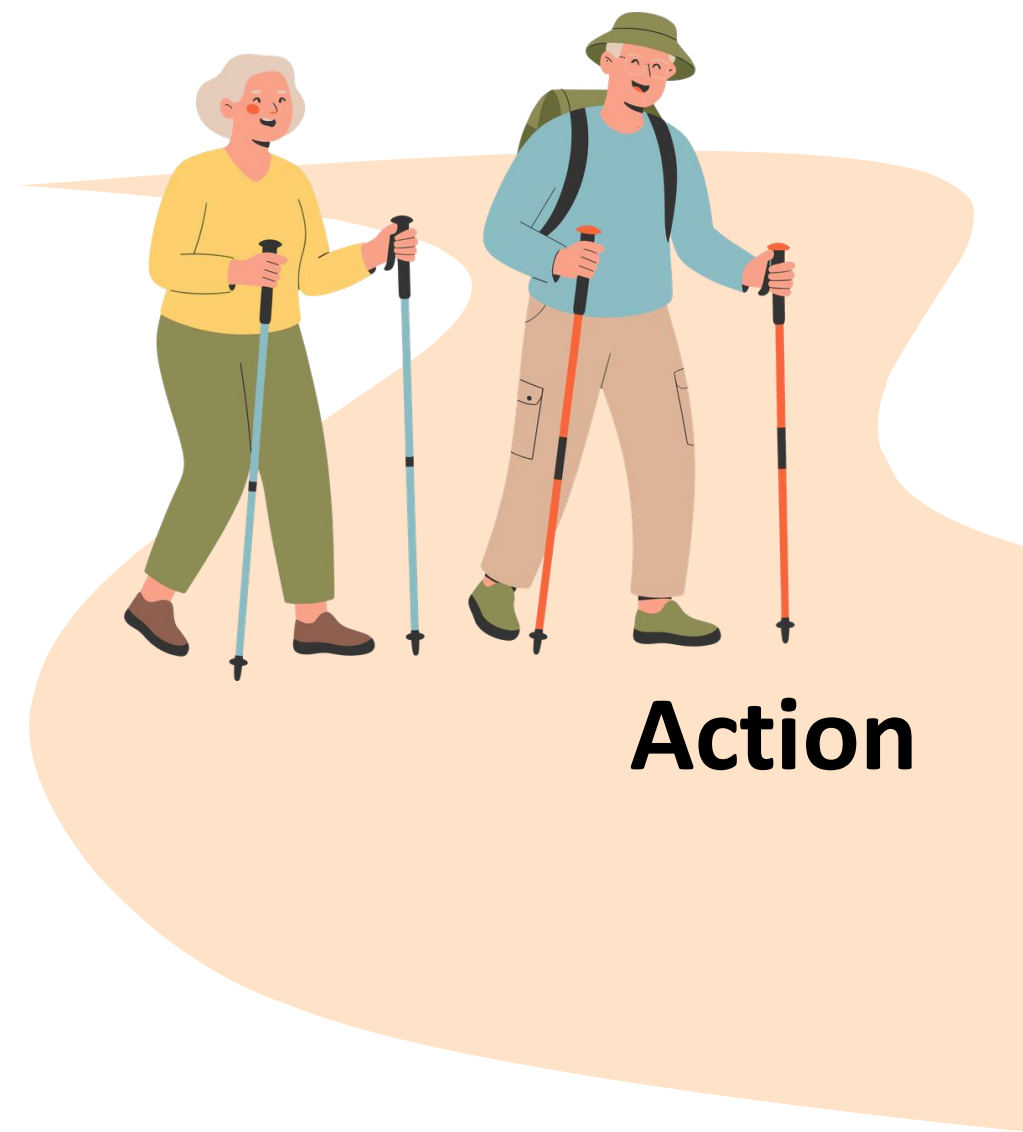
**Preparation**



*Example: The individual discusses safe ways to start moving more; they agree to begin with short, gentle walks three times a week and schedule them on a calendar*

# Action

- Starting a new behaviour;  
outwardly modifying behaviour



*Example: The individual is consistently walking 20 minutes a day, 4–5 days a week, and is beginning to add in light stretching or yoga*

# Maintenance

- Sustained behaviour; successfully maintained behaviour for at least 6 months

*Example: Six months later, the individual is now part of a weekly yoga program and continues walking regularly*



**Maintenance**

# Termination

- Likelihood of relapse is low; view this behaviour as part of who one is – it is now engrained as a habit

*Example: Physical activity is a normal part of life*

**Termination**

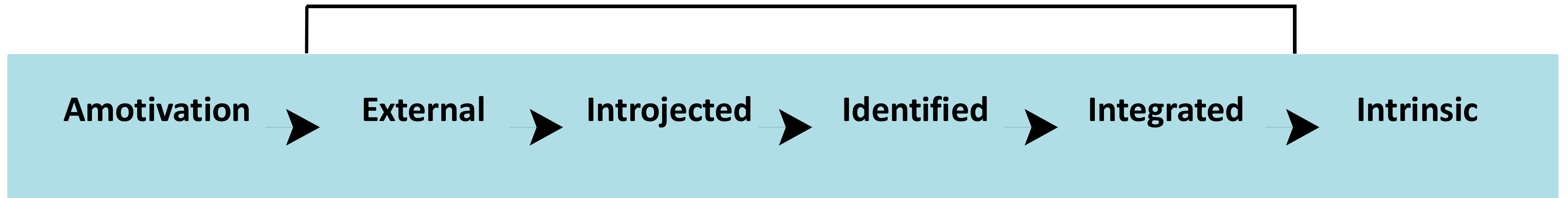
# Self-Regulatory Capacity

- Requires energy
  - Focusing, resisting impulses, and making new choices all draw on a finite mental resource



# Motivation

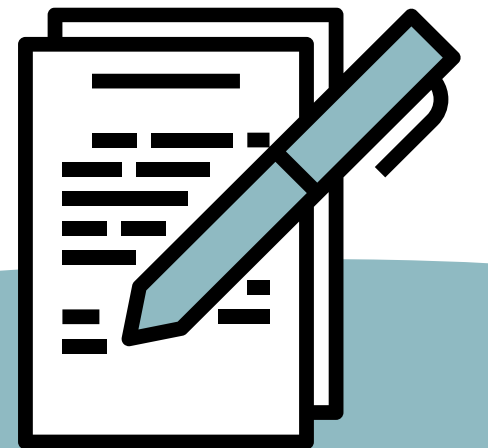
- Why we do the things we do!



Having certain types of motivation (external, introjected) **isn't enough for long-term change**

# What Matters to You?

- Connect physical activity to what it will allow you to do, experience, or value
  - *Eg, increasing my physical activity will help me better manage some of my symptoms of fatigue*
- What are you currently doing?



# Goal Setting

- Goals can direct action (ie, motivation), mobilize effort, foster persistence, and promote development of new learning strategies

# Make Them SMARTT-R


- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Timely
- Together
- Revisit



# Make Them SMARTT-R

- **Specific**
    - What do you want to accomplish?
- 

# Make Them SMARTT-R

- Specific
  - **Measurable**
    - How much?
    - How many?
    - How will you know when it is accomplished?
- 

# Make Them SMARTT-R

- Specific
- Measurable
- **Attainable**
  - How can you accomplish this goal?
  - What opportunities do you have for this goal?
  - How realistic is the goal based on other constraints?
  - How realistic is the goal based on your history with this (or similar) health behaviours?

# Make Them SMARTT-R

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- **Relevant**
  - Does this seem worthwhile?
  - Is this right for you?
  - Will I enjoy this?

# Make Them SMARTT-R

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- **Timely**
  - When?
  - What can you do six months from now?
  - What can you do six weeks from now?
  - What can you do today?

# Make Them SMARTT-R

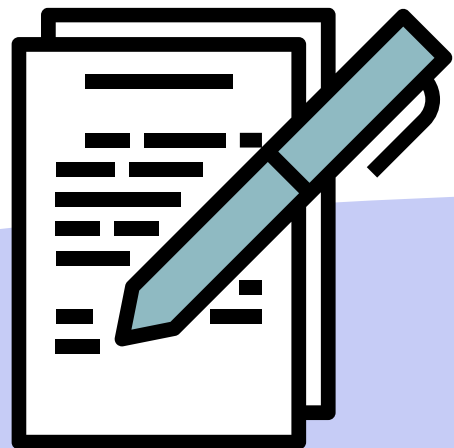
- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Timely
- **Together**
  - Who can you do this with?
  - Who will keep you accountable?

# Make Them SMARTT-R

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Timely
- Together
- **Revisit**
  - When are you going to revisit?
  - How does this goal need to change?

# Set Your Own SMARTT-R Goal

- Set a personal goal related to physical activity



<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>Attainable</b>	
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant</b>	
<b>T</b>	<b>Timely</b>	
<b>T</b>	<b>Together</b>	
<b>R</b>	<b>Revisit</b>	

# The Intention-Behaviour Gap


- Big gap between what we want to do and what we actually do
- To **close this gap**, we can:
  - Integrate self-monitoring
  - Boost confidence
  - Plan to act
    - Action plans
    - Contingency plans

# Integrate Self-Monitoring

- Record your behaviour



# Boost Confidence

- Reflect on past successes and identify opportunities to experience success
  - Find role models
  - Pay attention to your body signals and learn what they mean
  - Choose things you ENJOY!
- 

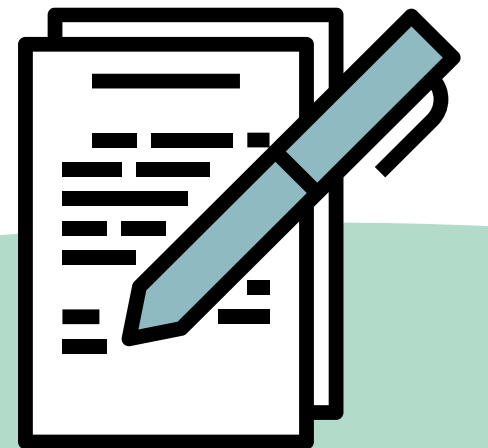
# Plan to Act

- Action plans: Concrete plans that specify who, what, when, where, and why



# Write Your Own Plan

- Take a moment to plan out some of the details
  - Who can help you stay on track?
  - What steps do you need to take to achieve your goal?
    - When? Where?

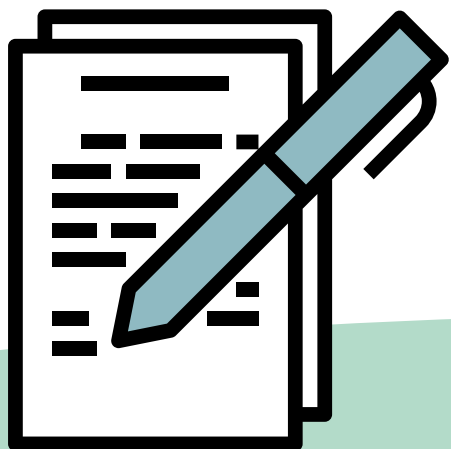


# Plan to Act

- Contingency plans: Reflect on barriers and facilitators and making a plan to reduce barriers and capitalize on facilitators

# Write Your Own Contingency Plan

- Identify two situations that could make it difficult for you to reach your goal
  - In case this happens, write down an action you could take to overcome it



**PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED**

Sometimes things don't go according to plan. In the space below, identify a barrier (eg, fatigue, bad weather) that could make it difficult for you to reach your goal. In case this happens, write down an action you could take to overcome it (eg, rest breaks, support).

If this happens...

Then I will...

If this happens...

Then I will...

# Consider Your Mindset

- **Self-compassion**
  - Give yourself the same compassion you'd show a friend when you're struggling, make a mistake, or feel badly about yourself



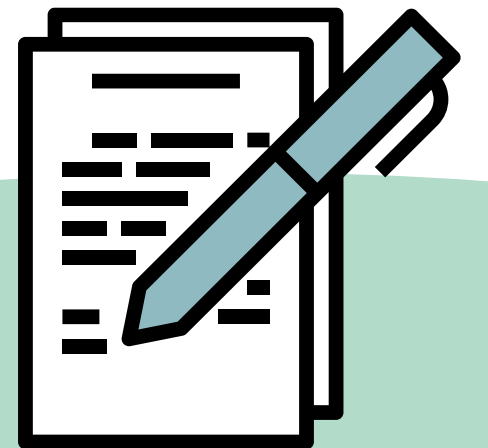
# Additional Tips to Stick With it

- Habit stack
- Start small



# Commit to Your Goal

- It's time to commit!
- Reflect on and list some of your past successes (confidence boosters), personal supports, and potential small wins (break it way down)
- Write yourself a commitment statement!



# Contact



## Amanda Wurz

- E-mail: [Amanda.Wurz@ufv.ca](mailto:Amanda.Wurz@ufv.ca)

The  
**MOVE**  
Well Lab

