The Five As

The 5As model is a motivational interviewing technique originally designed for smoking cessation that has been modified for use in weight loss intervention.1 In obesity management, the 5As technique has been shown to increase patient motivation and behavioral change.2 Using the 5 As is also recommended for reimbursement of lifestyle interventions by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).3

The 5As for obesity management are as follows4:

**Ask**
- Ask for permission to discuss weight
- Explore readiness for change

**Assess**
- Assess obesity class and stage
- Assess for drivers, complications, and barriers

**Advise**
- Advise on obesity risks
- Explain benefits of modest weight loss
- Explain need for long-term strategy
- Discuss treatment options

**Agree**
- Agree on realistic weight-loss expectations
- Focus on behavioral goals (SMART) and health outcomes
- Agree on treatment plan

**Assist**
- Address drivers and barriers
- Provide education and resources
- Refer to appropriate provider
- Arrange follow-up

**References**

3. Medicare Learning Network. *Intensive Behavioral Therapy (IBT) for Obesity* Baltimore: Department of Health and Human Services; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; 2013