**SDC 4. The 5 A’s approach**

The 5 A’s approach has been reported to elicit significant improvements in a variety of heath behaviors, including smoking cessation, weight reduction, dietary habits, and PA (Figure).54,55 Fortunately, progress has been made in that more providers now perform the first 2 A’s, that is, assess the risk behavior and advise behavior change. On the other hand, it is the less frequently performed A’s (agree, assist, arrange), which require more time to implement and specific counseling skill sets to facilitate, that have the greatest impact on healthful behavior change.56,57 Given the challenges in making healthy lifestyle changes, there has also been escalating interest in leveraging the widespread use of contemporary technologies that may easily provide periodic reminders, trackers (dietary intake and PA), and motivational tools to reinforce individual attempts to adopt healthy lifestyle practices.58-61 The core of effective lifestyle counseling is a patient-centered approach, whereby providers work with patients, helping them to create and implement an effective ‘action plan’ to reach their self-stated goals, while dealing with periodic relapse or recidivism.62 Common challenges and proposed solutions to setting and achieving lifestyle goals are detailed in Table.63

SDC 4 Figure. The 5 A’s to facilitate effective health behavior change counseling during a medical visit. Although more providers now perform the first 2 A’s, that is, assess the risk behavior and advise behavior change, it is the latter, less frequently performed 3 A’s (shaded) that have the greatest impact on healthful behavior change. Effective clinician behavior change strategies include using motivational interviewing along with rewards or incentives, asking patients to self-monitor behaviors, enhancing patients’ self-efficacy (confidence), accessing social support from family and friends, and scheduling regular follow-up communications/meetings to assess progress. Adapted from references 54 and 55.



