

STAGES OF CHANGE

PRECONTEMPLATION

KEY TASKS

- Increase concern and awareness of need for changing a target behavior
- Envision possibility of change and increase interest in changing

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Encourage thinking about change and build hope about change
- Ask open-ended questions and assist in identifying possible benefits of change
- With permission, provide motivating information
- Help keep them safe until they are ready for target behavior change and see if interested in harm reducing behavior

CONTEMPLATION

KEY TASKS

- Explore reasons for and against change
- Connect change with important values
- Analyzing costs and benefits of changing

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Help explore ambivalence and pros and cons
- Use motivational communication and assist in identifying most important values
- Help discover arguments for change and highlight change talk with reflections
- Support self-efficacy and decision-making
- Continue promoting other healthy behaviors that reduce risk and harm

PREPARATION

KEY TASKS

- Building commitment and creating a viable and acceptable change plan

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Assist in preparing to change by offering support, resources, and aids (e.g., medications)
- Help develop an effective change plan
- Help identify possible barriers and steps/plans to overcome these barriers
- Help set a timeline/date to begin/make the change
- Continue promoting risk-reducing activities

ACTION

KEY TASKS

- Implementing strategies for change
- Revising plan as needed
- Sustaining commitment to change in the face of difficulties

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Support the change and help revise the plan when needed
- Use summaries to help reflect their experiences and check in about any difficulties
- Assist with breaking down barriers (e.g., no transportation)
- Encourage them to reward themselves as they make strides and take action

MAINTENANCE

KEY TASKS

- Sustaining change over time and across a wide range of situations
- Avoiding going back to the old pattern of behavior
- Recover from slips

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Continue supporting self-efficacy/confidence and helping identify and emphasize benefits of change
- Help address any remaining barriers and encourage them to look out for events that can disrupt change
- Help create an environment that supports sustained change

HIGHLIGHTS

WHAT IS ADDICTION?

Addiction is a well-established, problematic pattern of behavior that is difficult to change. A behavior becomes an addiction when it becomes excessive, problematic, and difficult to stop.

SAMHSA'S WORKING DEFINITION OF RECOVERY

A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

WHY ARE THE STAGES OF CHANGE IMPORTANT?

You cannot be motivated for an individual. However, if you can identify what stage the person is in and understand their motivation, you can help them move through the stages of change by:

- Identifying the tasks needed to move to the next stage
- Helping them develop strategies to move forward

SPECIFICITY OF THE STAGES OF CHANGE

The stages of changes are behavior- and goal-specific. Individuals can be at different stages of change for different behaviors. In the example below, the individual is at different stages for each behavior:

- Preparation stage for quitting heroin: still actively using, but have made a decision to stop and is preparing to do so
- Maintenance stage for carrying Narcan: trained to use Narcan four months ago and have been carrying a kit ever since

Behavior	Stages of Change				
	PC	C	PA	A	M
Quitting Cigarettes		X			
Carrying Narcan					X
Quitting Heroin			X		
Quitting Alcohol	X				
Using Sterile Syringes				X	