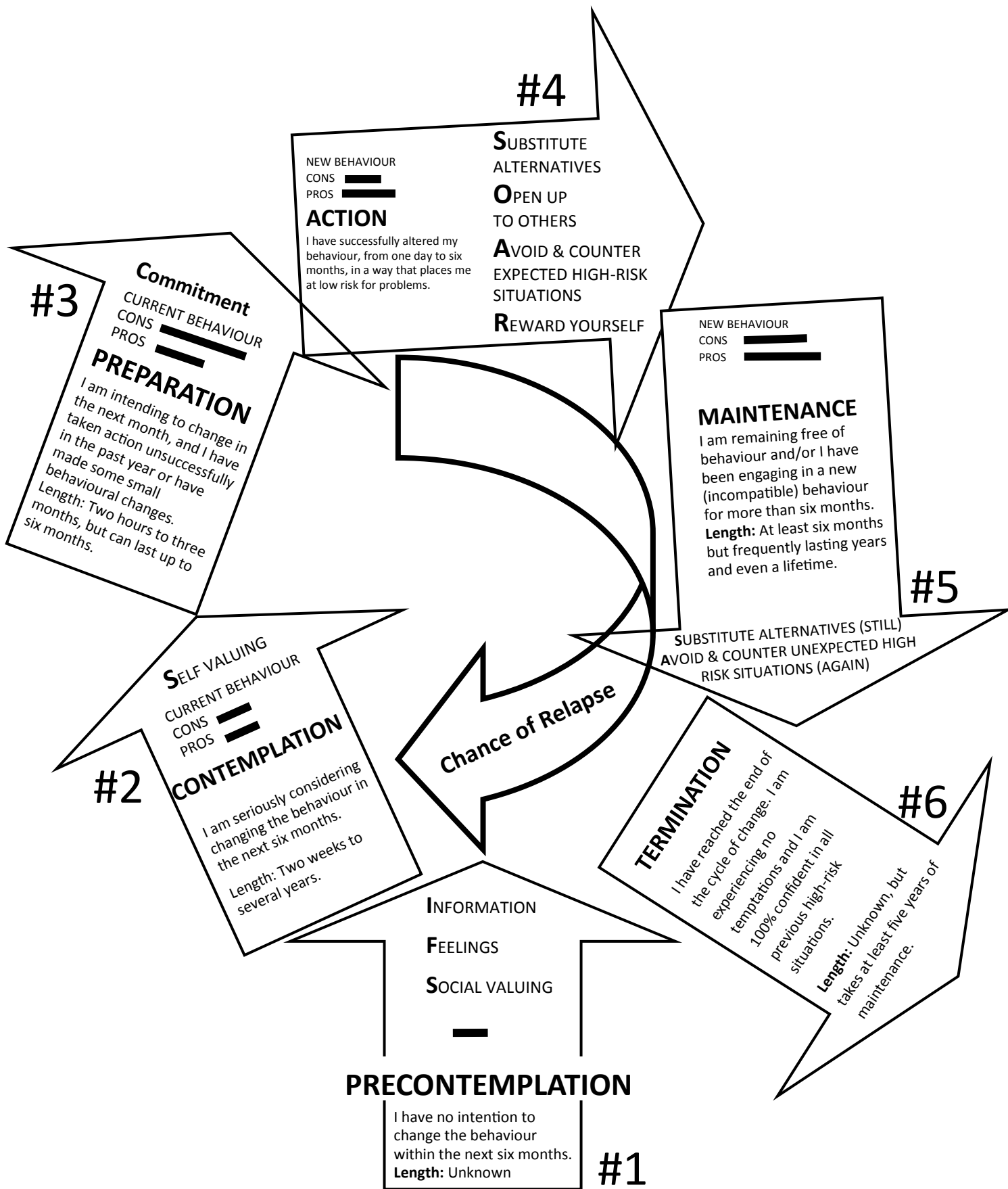


Your Guide to Stages of Change



How to Move Through the Stages of Change

PRECONTEMPLATION

1

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Consider new information about yourself and the problem.
- Know the benefits of changing.
- Express your feelings about the demands on you and about potential solutions.
- Understands others' demands on you to change and how your behaviour affects the environment or others

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES:

- ◆ Have a professional, or someone you trust, give you feedback on your behaviour and how it may be affecting you and others.
- ◆ Monitor the behaviour to see when, where and how much you do it. Note your feelings before, during and afterwards.
- ◆ Do some reading to learn more about this behaviour,
- ◆ Tell someone your feelings about the demands on you to change and about what you believe your choices are.
- ◆ Look for ways that society and others will help you to change.
- ◆ Notice how your behaviour affects the environment of others.

CONTEMPLATION

2

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Work through any ambivalence: the costs and benefits of changing, with professional help if needed.
- Reduce the cost of changing.
- Consider what you value more than the problem behaviour or consider how resolving the problem, or starting the new behaviour, would be in agreement with what you value.
- Consider what kind of person you want to become.
- Take some small step in exploring behaviour change.
- Come to believe and feel that life would be significantly better **without the problem.**

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES:

- ◆ Write down the cost and benefits of changing.
- ◆ Decide how to reduce the cost of changing,
- ◆ Think about what you value most
- ◆ Close your eyes and imagine yourself as the kind of person you want to be.
- ◆ Take some small step, and begin to experiment with ways of changing.

PREPARATION

3

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Choose and commit to the best course of action.
- Prepare for action and if needed, get professional help.
- Make a contract with yourself and others.
- Publicly commit to at least one person to make the change

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES

- ◆ Just make a choice, or get help to make a decision.
- ◆ Write down your goals and, step-by-step, how you are going to get there.
- ◆ Commit to yourself to start by a certain date.
- ◆ Tell at least one trusted person in your life about your decision.

ACTION

4

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Substitute alternatives for problem behaviours
- Be open and trusting about problems and progress with someone who cares.
- Plan to avoid and counter expected situations that elicit the problem behaviour or deter new behaviour.
- Reward yourself or to be rewarded by others for making changes.
- Acknowledge to yourself when you successfully take a difficult step on your own.

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES:

- ◆ Start a pleasurable, non-addictive activity incompatible with the old.
- ◆ Learn meditation or stress management.
- ◆ Repeat positive self-statements.
- ◆ Learn to say no.
- ◆ Get help from a professional or trusted others on problems.
- ◆ Ask others to help in specific ways, tell them what you need and educate them about your experiences.
- ◆ Join a mutual self-help group to share and get support.
- ◆ Identify, and plan to avoid, leave, people and places that encourage problem behaviour or deter new behaviour.
- ◆ Change your environment. For example, remove temptations and put up reminder notes about what you need to do.
- ◆ Make a list of rewards, people and places that will support your actions.
- ◆ Give yourself rewards for the actions you have taken each day.
- ◆ Contract with others to give you rewards for specific steps taken.
- ◆ Look at what you did that resulted in the progress you are making.

MAINTENANCE

5

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Continue to substitute alternatives for problem behaviours.
- Plan to avoid and counter situations that unexpectedly elicit the problem behaviour or deter new behaviour.

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES

- ◆ Continue to substitute new behaviours or activities incompatible with the old.
- ◆ Plan for unexpected high-risk situations, with professional help if needed.

TERMINATION:

6

- You have reached the end of the cycle of change.
- You are experiencing no temptations, and you are 100% confident in all previous high-risk situations.

Importance , Confidence and Desire to Change

Most people are in this group because they are thinking about making a change, or because other people think they should make a change. What is the main thing you would like to change ?

Change: _____

- On the following 0-10 scale , please rate the importance to you of making a change in your life (or continuing to make a change that you 've already began). Please circle the number that most closely matches the importance of this change to you:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all important

Most important thing in my life

- Sometimes even when goals or plans are important to us, we are still not sure if we can successfully achieve them. Please rate your confidence that you can successfully make (or maintain) the change

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all confident

Completely confident

- Sometimes, even though we know a change is important and we are confident we can make it, we really aren't looking forward to making the change. Please circle the number that most closely

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Dread making the change

Excited about making the change

Decisional Balance Worksheet

When we think about making changes, most of us don't really consider all the "sides" in a complete way. Instead, we often do what we think we "should" do, avoiding doing things we don't feel like doing, or just feel confused or overwhelmed and give up thinking about it all. Thinking through the pros and cons of both changing and not making a change is one way to help us make sure we have fully considered a possible change. This can help us to "hang on" to our plan in times of stress or temptation. Below, write in the reasons that you think of in each of the boxes.

	Benefits/ Pros	Costs/ Cons
<u>Making a change</u>	- - - -	- - - -
<u>Not Changing</u>	- - - -	- - - -

Change—Its Effects on Others

(Adapted from "On Track—Middlesex Health Unit")

It is inevitable that when you make change, others will be affected. Often this fact stops you from pursuing change. You may believe that others can't tolerate your changes or worse yet, you may fear their response to your changes. Undoubtedly, the process of change can alter friendships and relationships. As well, others may be highly invested in you AS YOU ARE. Changing would decrease their benefits and make their life temporarily uncomfortable. (This is the case when a woman begins to assert herself by setting limits on other people's use of her time and energies).

It is important to remember that healthy relationships can withstand the rigors of the change process. Not only that, but the other people involved may actually personally grow and be positively influenced by the experience of your changes.

What can you expect from others in reaction to your change process?

1. Expect resistance - it's human to try to maintain the status quo. Resistance can take many forms as people respond with their feelings (e.g. Anger), thoughts (e.g. "You can't do it") and behaviours (e.g. not talking to you).

Coping Tips - Use self calming techniques, positive self talk and assertive skills when others are expressing their resistance. When appropriate negotiate reasonable compromises.

2. Anticipate control tactics - for their own comfort, people may attempt to "persuade" you to return to familiar patterns of behaviour. This persuasion may include various forms of manipulation. Here are a few examples of various types of manipulation.

A) **Manipulation through flattery**

E.g.) "You're so good at making coffee. Go get me a cup, will ya"!

B) **Manipulation through incompetence**

E.g.) "I've never been good at handling money. I don't suppose you'd be a sweetheart and give me 20 bucks.

C) **Manipulation through abdication**

E.g.) "It's a woman's job to look after kids".

D) **Manipulation through put-down**

E.g.) "You're too stupid (old, shy, etc.) to go back to school".

"Com'mon honey, why are you making a big deal out of this!?"

