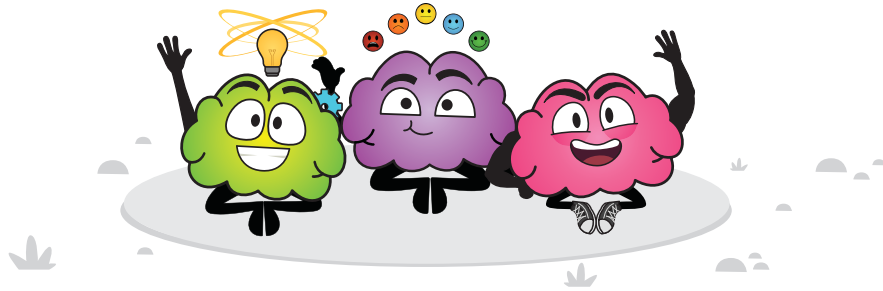


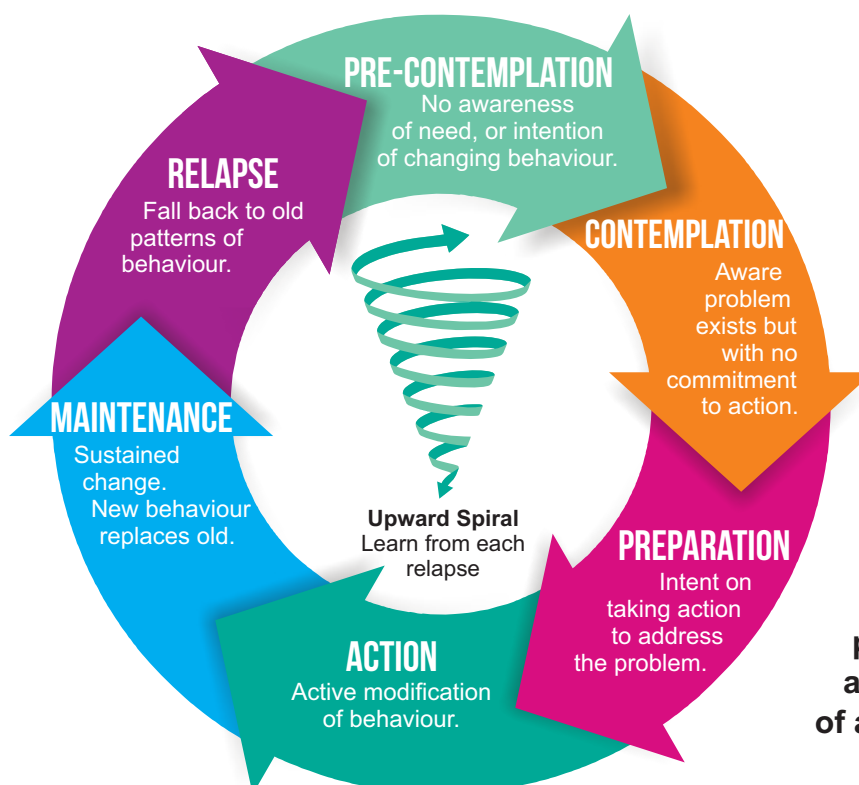
# REBOOT HOW-TO GUIDE

# CYCLE OF CHANGE



**People don't change behaviour quickly or decisively. Changes in behaviour, especially habitual behaviours, occur in an incremental and ongoing cyclic process.** Porschaska & DiClementi (1983) outlined the stages of change in the Cycle of Change as a key element of their The Transtheoretical Model (TTM.) The Cycle of Change describes the six stages that individuals pass through in the creation of positive change: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, relapse, and maintenance. Individuals can enter or exit at any point in the cycle, and each stage is non-linear in progress and of indeterminant length.

The stages are realised through the completion of a set of tasks rather than a set time period. With a 35-year history of research and extensive empirical studies on over 150 000 research participants, the Cycle of Change provides a well validated and clear description of the change process and how best to support it (Porschaska & DiClementi, 1983, 1994; Norcorss, 2012.) Though grounded in substance misuse and addiction treatment, the Cycle of Change addresses key elements in the change process, in particular motivation, agency, and skill building.



**Entry in or exit out is possible at any stage, and each stage can be of any duration and may not be linear.**

# Pre-contemplation

**People in the precontemplation stage do not intend to take action in the foreseeable future** (defined as within the next six months). Here, they are content with the current behaviours and not yet concerned to make change, often due to a lack of awareness that their behaviour is problematic or produces negative consequences. People in this stage frequently underestimate the benefits of making change and place too much emphasis on their perceived inability to do so or the negative implications of change. Multiple unsuccessful and unsupported attempts to make change can demoralise people and lead to a fixed mindset of “I’m too dumb” or “I can’t do it.” This is particularly so in the school system that assumes all same aged students have acquired key developmental skills such as self-regulation and problem solving.

Watching peers appear to be able to engage and learn and “be good” can incorrectly confirm for a “naughty” child that there is something inherently wrong with them and that it is pointless to attempt behaviour change.

While pre-contemplators are often characterized as resistant, argumentative, unmotivated, or in denial, this stage is better understood as the result of a poor conscious awareness of the impact and nature of their behaviours and/or lack an internal locus of control and the associated agency. The category is further segmented into reluctant (lack sufficient knowledge to feel change is necessary), rebellious (afraid of losing control through engaging with support or change), resigned (feel hopeless about change and overwhelmed by the energy required) and rationalising (SAMHSA, 1999.) Key to moving to contemplation is raising conscious awareness of the negative consequences, causes and cures of the problem behaviour, and fostering motivation through increased agency. High intensity efforts to enforce change typically result in more resistance.



# Contemplation

**The contemplation phase is a fork in the road.** Here people are weighing up making positive changes in the foreseeable future (defined as within the next 6 months). Built on a recognition that current behaviours are problematic, individuals are more thoughtful and give consideration to the pros and cons of changing behaviour. But ambivalence does prevail and the cons remain top-of-mind! In a meta-analysis across 48 health risk behaviours, the pros and cons of changing were found to have equal footing in contemplator’s thoughts (Hall & Rossi, 2008). This toggling between the costs and benefits can produce profound ambivalence and lead to chronic contemplation, procrastination, and a form of learned helplessness.

Contemplators are not yet ready for action orientated support as they are still to master the key skills in this stage: understanding of the consequences of the problem and of positive change, outlining positive possibilities and general intention, defining a new self-identity, developing greater agency and self-efficacy, managing difficult emotions and increasing commitment (Norcross, 2012.) The process of seeing things differently can at times be filled with guilt, remorse, and a sense of hopelessness (SAMHSA, 1999.) Change can be an uncomfortable journey.

# Preparation

**The preparation stage arises when an individual has resolved their ambivalence toward change and believes that they can make change and that it will result in a better life.** In this stage people move from contemplating to implementing actual change. As enthusiasm does not compensate for ineptness, this phase of skill building is critical to long-term success. The key tasks in this phase include: explore, clarify and resolve ambivalence, make a clear decision, construct a firm action plan, investigate possible change options and supports and possibly experiment with change.

# Action

People enter the action stage after they have either modified their problem behaviour or introduced a healthy new one in the last six months and intend to sustain it. There is a tendency to equate this stage with behavioural change, but it is only 1 of 6 stages and requires both the preliminary preparation and following maintenance phases to ensure the change is ongoing.

Key tasks during the action stage include: address grief and loss issues that arise from changed behaviours, intentionally control possible triggers within the environment, implement the new behaviours daily, and establish contingency management to ensure relapses are short-lived.

# Maintenance

In maintenance, people have sustained their behaviour change for a while (defined as more than 6 months) and intend to maintain it. Key tasks in this stage work to prevent relapse to earlier stages and sustain the motivation and practices to not return to the former behaviour. While in the Maintenance stage, people are less tempted to relapse and grow increasingly more confident that they can continue their changes.



# Relapse

Lapses (small slips with a quick return to action) and relapses (full return to original behaviours) are a very normal part of change and should be expected and prepared for in advance! Lapses and relapses can occur at any stage in the cycle and are potentially an important learning opportunity that propels a person to become stronger in their resolve to change. Alternatively, relapses can be a trigger for giving up in the quest for change entirely. Key skills that determine the capacity to recover from a relapse are the ability to review the change endeavour up to that point, identify personal strengths and challenges, and the ability to problem-solve and prepare in advance to solve similar problems the next time they occur.

## Matching Stages with Appropriate Support

The Cycle of Change explains the changes in an individual's cognition, emotion, and behaviour, but not the processes that inspire change to occur. As the name suggests, the model is transtheoretical and embraces the tools of support from a broad range of theories and associated strategies. However, it is critically important to marry the right strategy to the stage that the individual is in. For example, using goal setting tools with a person in precontemplation will invoke resistance and not effectively support change.



STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS	SKILLS TO BE MASTERED	EFFECTIVE SUPPORT
<b>Pre contemplation</b>	Unwilling, unaware or too discouraged to make change within the next six months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of the impact of the current behaviour</li> <li>• Improved agency and an internal locus of control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish rapport and trust</li> <li>• Commend positives and find strengths</li> <li>• Explore the events that precipitate your work together</li> <li>• Assess their readiness for change (possible use of the</li> <li>• Readiness Ruler: how important or how able do you feel to change from 1 to 10?</li> <li>• Identify cause and effect (use escalation mapping)</li> <li>• Identify patterns of behaviour</li> <li>• Impact on other aspects of life and relationships create comfort and support and an optimistic environment/ community reinforcement – group work</li> <li>• Agree on the general direction and how they would like to feel</li> <li>• Elicit perceived negative consequences, express concern and offer information support and follow up (be an ear)</li> </ul>
<b>Contemplation</b>	Thinking about changing but not yet committed due to a lack of ability or reluctance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline intention</li> <li>• Define a new self-identity</li> <li>• Consider the consequences of your problem and of positive change</li> <li>• Develop agency and self-efficacy</li> <li>• Notice effect on others</li> <li>• Manage difficult emotions</li> <li>• Increase commitment to the process of change</li> <li>• Start measuring the current behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open ended questioning</li> <li>• Reflective listening</li> <li>• Clear cause and effect lines</li> <li>• Support for clients to connect with internal motivators</li> <li>• Support to explore the costs and benefits of behaviours</li> <li>• Support to find agency and personal responsibility</li> <li>• Find and celebrate strengths and self-efficacy</li> <li>• Support to explore and set goals</li> <li>• Shift from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation (they made me vs I want to)</li> <li>• Connection to cultural traditions as a source of identity and strength</li> <li>• Demonstrating interest and curiosity</li> <li>• Motivational interviewing support to tip the decisional balance – support decision making ambivalence</li> <li>• Examine their understanding of change and its costs (lost friends, peer rejection etc.)</li> </ul>

STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS	SKILLS TO BE MASTERED	EFFECTIVE SUPPORT
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for loss and grief (old ways and relationships etc.)</li> <li>• Patience and empathy</li> <li>• Measure behaviours</li> <li>• Clarify premature decision making or clients setting themselves up for failure</li> <li>• Emphasise personal choice and responsibility – exploring and setting goals, goal sampling – trial a new approach in the short term and reflect trialling small steps</li> <li>• Going public</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<p>Seriously considering and planning to change behaviour within the next 30 days. May have initiated small steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore, clarify and resolve ambivalence</li> <li>• Build your commitment</li> <li>• Make firm plans</li> <li>• Increase measurement of the current behaviour</li> <li>• Develop menu of choices</li> <li>• Take a few initial small steps and experiment with change</li> <li>• Identify triggers for both good and bad behaviours</li> <li>• Gather support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the skills necessary to achieve change</li> <li>• Negotiate a plan to cut back or quit</li> <li>• Praise the decision to change behaviour, prioritise behaviour change opportunities and opportunities for supported practice, identify and assist in problem solving (i.e. Speedbumps) encourage small initial steps, assist them to identify social support</li> <li>• Manage social pressures, challenging feelings etc.</li> <li>• Anticipation of problems and pitfalls</li> <li>• Lower barriers to action</li> <li>• Develop a Change Contract</li> <li>• Track current behaviours and measure</li> <li>• Identify subgoals and steps</li> <li>• Break down all or nothing thinking</li> <li>• Help anticipating and preparing for problems</li> <li>• Identify system problems – ways organisations</li> <li>• make change hard for the individual</li> <li>• Enlisting social support</li> </ul>

STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS	SKILLS TO BE MASTERED	EFFECTIVE SUPPORT
<b>Action</b>	Actively doing things to change or modify behaviour for less than six months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take decisive action</li> <li>• Address grief and loss issues</li> <li>• Stimulus control</li> <li>• Contingency management</li> <li>• Reward yourself for any success</li> <li>• Daily implementation of new behaviours</li> <li>• Cultivate your environment and support team</li> </ul>	
<b>Maintenance</b>	Maintain new behaviour for at least six months on the way to permanence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish alternatives</li> <li>• New behaviour becomes selfsustaining</li> <li>• Sustain attention to relapse risks</li> <li>• Have backup plans for inevitable slips</li> <li>• Remind yourself that you can do it</li> </ul>	
<b>Relapse</b>	Fall back into old behaviour pattern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn to say no</li> <li>• Develop and practice your slip up plan</li> <li>• Avoid high risk triggers</li> <li>• Resist urges</li> <li>• Maintain a positive outlook</li> </ul>	

