

Stages of Change

Precontemplation	The costs of the problem behavior (such as drug use) are not yet recognized. The individual is in denial and is not seriously considering changing their behavior. They may have made previous attempts to change, but have since given up.
Contemplation	During contemplation there is ambivalence about change. The individual recognizes reasons to change their behavior, but still has hesitations. The problem behavior continues.
Preparation	The individual has decided to make a change and begins to consider how to do so. Minor adjustments in behavior may be made during this stage.
Action	Action is taken to end the previous problem behavior. The individual may be avoiding previous triggers, reaching out for help, or taking other steps to avoid temptation.
Maintenance	The changes made during the action stage are maintained. The individual may continue to face challenges maintaining the change.
Relapse	After making changes, many individuals will eventually return to their previous problem behaviors. It can take several passes through the stages to permanently end a behavior.