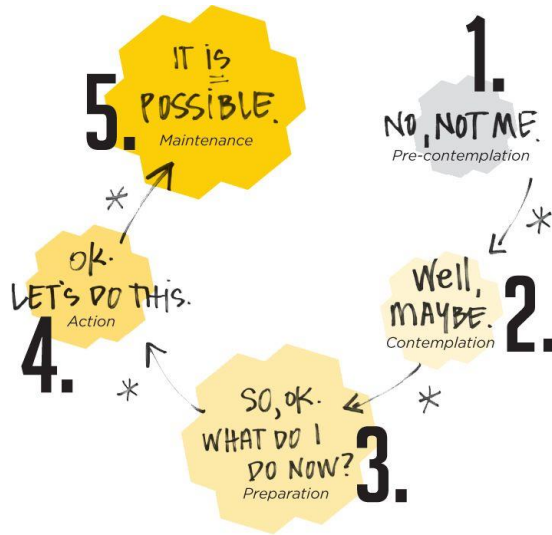


Stages of Change Model



One of the best-known approaches to change was introduced in the late 1970s by researchers James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente, who were studying ways to help people quit smoking. The Stages of Change Model has been found to be an effective aid in understanding how people go through a change in behavior.

In this model, change occurs gradually and relapses are an inevitable part of the process of making a lifelong change. People are often unwilling or resistant to change during the early stages, but they eventually develop a proactive and committed approach to changing a behavior. This model demonstrates that change is rarely easy and often requires a gradual progression of small steps toward a larger goal.

Stage 1: Precontemplation

<p>Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • denial • ignorance of the problem 	<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rethink your behavior • introspection & self-analysis • assess risks of current behavior
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During this stage, people are not considering a change and are often described as "in denial." In some cases, people in this stage don't understand that their behavior is problematic or are under-informed about the consequences of their actions.

If you are in this stage, you may feel resigned to your current state or believe that you have no control over your behavior. Here are some

important questions to ask yourself: have you ever tried to change this behavior in the past, how do you recognize that you have a problem, what would have to happen for you to consider your behavior a problem?

Stage 2: Contemplation

<p>Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ambivalence • conflicted emotions 	<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weigh pros & cons of change • confirm readiness & ability to change • identify barriers to change
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During this stage, people become more and more aware of the potential benefits of making a change, but the costs tend to stand out even more. This conflict creates a strong sense of ambivalence about changing and because of this uncertainty, the contemplation stage can last months or even years. Unfortunately, many people never make it past this stage.

You may view change as a process of giving something up rather than a means of gaining emotional, mental or physical benefits. If you are contemplating a behavior change, here are some important questions to ask yourself: why do you want to change, is there anything preventing you from changing, what are some things that could help you make this change?

Stage 3: Preparation

Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• experimenting with small changes• collecting information about change	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• write down your goals• prepare a plan of action• make a list of motivating statements
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During the preparation stage, you might begin making small changes to prepare for a larger life change. For example, if losing weight is your goal, you might switch to lower-fat foods. If your goal is to quit smoking, you might switch brands or smoke less each day. You might also take some sort of

direct action such as consulting a therapist, joining a health club or reading self-help books.

If you are in the preparation stage, there are some steps you can take to improve your chances of successfully making a lasting life change. Gather as much information as you can about ways to change your behavior. Prepare a list of motivating statements and write down your goals. Find outside resources such as support groups, counselors or friends who can offer advice and encouragement.

Stage 4: Action

Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• taking direct action toward a goal	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reward your successes• seek out social support
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During this stage, people begin taking direct action in order to accomplish their goals. Oftentimes, resolutions fail because the previous steps have not been given enough thought or time. For example, many people make a New Year's resolution to lose weight and immediately start a new exercise regimen, begin eating a

healthier diet and cut back on snacks. These definitive steps are vital to success, but these efforts are often abandoned in a matter of weeks because the previous steps have been overlooked.

If you are currently taking action towards achieving a goal, congratulate and reward yourself for any positive steps you take. Reinforcement and support are extremely important in helping maintain positive steps toward change. Take the time to periodically review your motivations, resources and progress in order to refresh your commitment and belief in your abilities.

Stage 5: Maintenance

Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintaining a new behavior• avoiding temptation	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop coping strategies for temptation• remember to reward yourself
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The maintenance stage involves successfully avoiding former behaviors and keeping up new behaviors. People become more assured that they will be able to continue their change.

If you are trying to maintain a new behavior, look for ways to avoid temptation. Try replacing old habits with more positive actions. Reward yourself when you are able to successfully avoid a relapse. If you do lapse, don't be too hard on yourself or give up. Instead, remind yourself that it was just a minor setback. As you will learn in the next stage, relapses are common and are a part of the process of making a lifelong change.

Stage 6: Relapse

Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• disappointment• frustration• feelings of failure	Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify triggers that lead to relapse• recognize barriers to success• reaffirm your goal & commitment to change
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In any behavior change, relapses are a common occurrence. When you go through a relapse, you might experience feelings of failure, disappointment and frustration. The key to success is to not let these setbacks undermine your self-confidence. If you lapse back to an old behavior, take a hard look at why it happened. What triggered the relapse? What

can you do to avoid these triggers in the future?

While relapses can be difficult, the best solution is to start again with the preparation, action or maintenance stages of behavior change. You might want to reassess your resources and techniques. Reaffirm your motivation, plan of action and commitment to your goals. Also, make plans for how you will deal with any future temptations.

Resolutions fail when the proper preparation and actions are not taken. By approaching a goal with an understanding of how to best prepare, act and maintain a new behavior, you will be more likely to succeed.

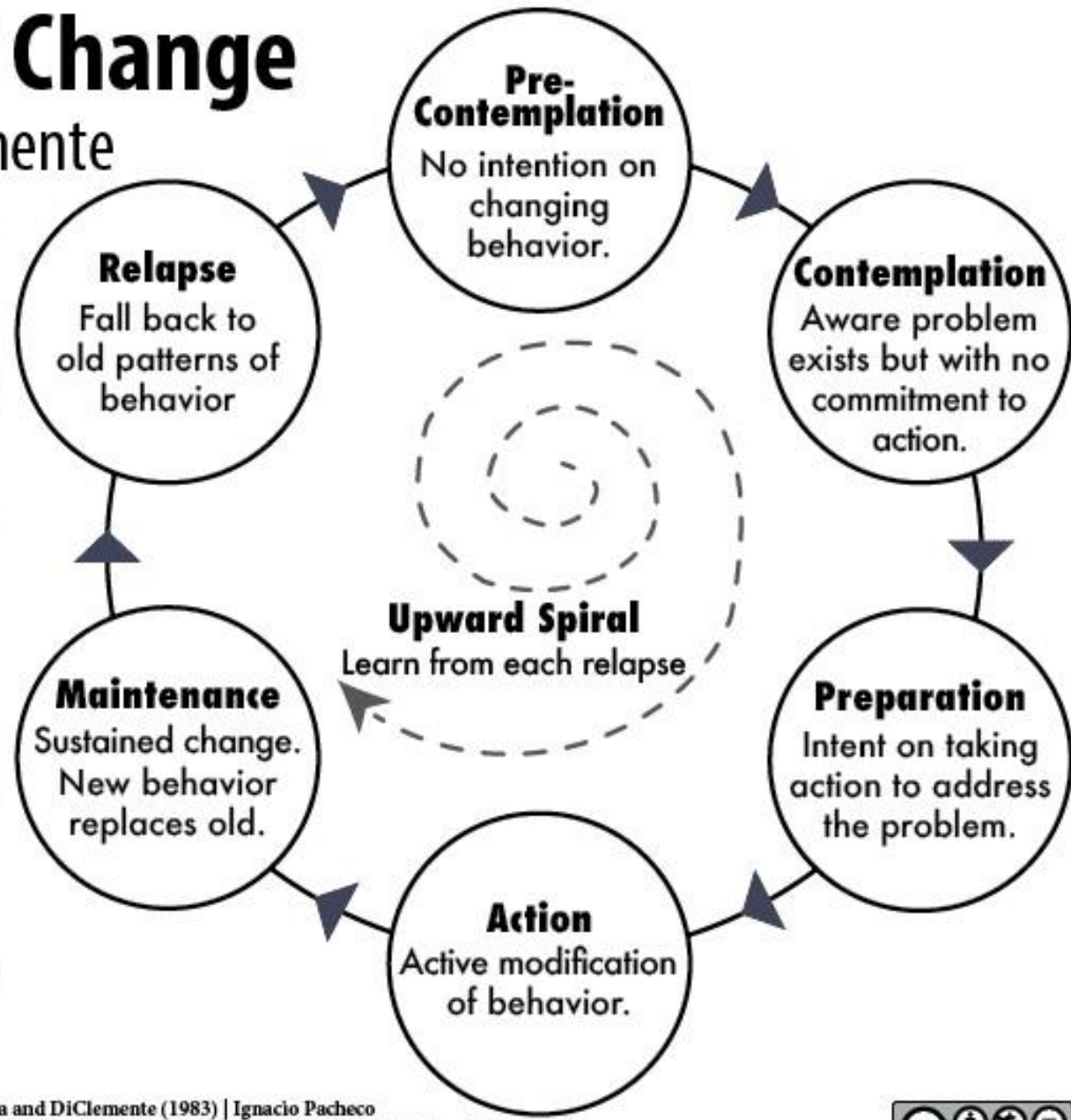
Adapted From:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/the-stages-of-change-2794868> & <http://socialworktech.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Social-Work-Tech-CoC-en-bw-v3.4.jpg>

The Cycle of Change

Prochaska & DiClemente

- **Precontemplation:** A logical starting point for the model, where there is no intention of changing behavior; the person may be unaware that a problem exists
- **Contemplation:** The person becomes aware that there is a problem, but has made no commitment to change
- **Preparation:** The person is intent on taking action to correct the problem; usually requires buy-in from the client (i.e. the client is convinced that the change is good) and increased self-efficacy (i.e. the client believes s/he can make change)
- **Action:** The person is in active modification of behavior
- **Maintenance:** Sustained change occurs and new behavior(s) replaces old ones. Per this model, this stage is also transitional
- **Relapse:** The person falls back into old patterns of behavior
- **Upward Spiral:** Each time a person goes through the cycle, they learn from each relapse and (hopefully) grow stronger so that relapse is shorter or less devastating.



The Cycle of Change
 Adapted from a work by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983) | Ignacio Pacheco
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