

Stages of Change Framework

Making behavioural changes can be hard, and some changes are harder to make than others. Support helps. When youth workers are supporting a young person on a change journey, a useful framework is Stages of Change.

Stages of Change is part of a broader framework called the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Behavioral Change¹, an adaptable, evidence-based model. Although developed to address addictions, the Stages of Change can be used to support other change efforts.

The TTM model identifies six Stages of Change that map out a process of engaging in changing a negative behaviour, as well as two principles and ten processes to support change making.

Once we know where a youth is at in the Stages of Change, we can match our feedback and guidance to their readiness.

The Transtheoretical Behavioral Change Model was developed by Dr. James O. Prochaska, Carlo Di Clemente, and colleagues, beginning in the late 1970s.

KEEP IN MIND

There is no singular pathway; youth may find themselves at each stage multiple times before change is solidified.

01 Precontemplation



**I DON'T
WANNA DO
THIS!**

NO INTENTION TO CHANGE
WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

02 Contemplation



**MAYBE I
CAN TRY IT
OUT...**

INTENTION TO CHANGE
WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

**LET'S
DO THIS!**

HAVE MADE CHANGE IN THE
LAST SIX MONTHS

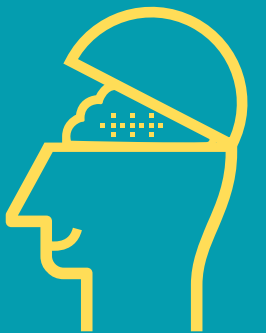
04 Action



**SO...HOW
DO I GET
STARTED?**

READY TO TAKE ACTION
WITHIN 30 DAYS

03 Preparation



05 Maintenance



**I THINK I
CAN KEEP
THIS UP.**

CAN LAST SIX MONTHS
TO FIVE YEARS

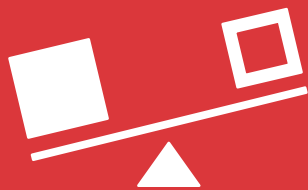
06 Termination



**ON
AND ON.**

CHANGE IS MAINTAINED
FOR FIVE YEARS OR MORE

Two Principles of Change



01. Decisional Balance

Most people are more likely to be satisfied with a decision if they have considered the potential pros and cons.

- In the Precontemplation stage, the cons of changing the behaviour outweigh the pros, so it is not the right time to make a change. In the later stages, the pros outweigh the cons, which facilitates action.
- Changing is hard work. In the early stages of making a change, it's important to help the young person recognize the pros of changing their behaviour. In the later stages, it's important to make sure the cons aren't too high.



02. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to achieve a desired goal, and the confidence to make and sustain change.

- As the young person progresses through the Stages of Change and confidence increases, the temptation to abandon their change effort decreases.

Principles and Processes

Certain principles and processes work best at each Stage of Change to reduce resistance, facilitate progress, and maintain change.

Five Experiential Processes

GET THE FACTS

CR Consciousness Raising

By learning new facts, ideas, or tips to support the young person's behavioural change, you can help them to become aware of the causes, consequences, and solutions pertaining to a particular challenging behaviour.

NOTICE YOUR FEELINGS

DR Dramatic Relief

Increasing a young person's emotional awareness means drawing attention to their feelings with respect to the behaviour they want to change. This could mean experiencing the negative emotions of the old behaviour, and the positive emotions of the new behaviour.

CONSIDER OTHERS

ER Environmental Reevaluation

Talking with a young person about how their behaviour impacts others will help them to realize the negative impacts of their behaviour and the positive impacts of changing that behaviour.

UNDERSTAND HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF

SR Self-Reevaluation

The behavioural change is an important part of the young person's identity. Support them to change their self-perception and identity in relation to the behaviour that they want to change.

NOTICE PUBLIC SUPPORT

SoL Social Liberation

Recognizing social and community supports that reinforce positive behavioural change means drawing attention to the ways in which social policy and investment reinforce positive changes.

Five Behavioural Processes

MAKE A COMMITMENT

SeL Self-Liberation

Focus on the young person's ability to give themselves permission to make change and take ownership over the change process. Research shows that having more than one pathway to creating change is helpful; when supporting a young person to change, you could offer multiple options for achieving the same change outcome.

GET SUPPORT

HR Helping Relationships

Seek and use social supports to make and sustain behavioural changes. These helping relationships will ideally combine caring, trust, openness, and acceptance. You have the potential to provide a therapeutic helping relationship that positively supports change.

USE SUBSTITUTES

CC Counter Conditioning

Substitute healthy behaviours and thoughts for old behaviours. This process is very important in the Maintenance stage. Teach young people alternative behaviours for addressing the underlying causes that motivate the behaviour that they are trying to change.

USE REWARDS

RM Reinforcement Management

Increase the rewards for healthy behaviour change, and decrease the rewards for old behaviours. Think of ways to reward the young person's engagement in change processes.

WHAT'S AROUND YOU?

SC Stimulus Control

Remove reminders or cues to engage in the old behaviours, and use reminders to engage in the healthy behaviours. Consider how the conditions for a young person to change are supported, institutionally and in practice.



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The next page explains how to apply these processes to the Stages of Change.

Strategies to Support Youth

Through the Stages of Change



01 | Precontemplation

Not ready to make a change



Initially, the young person may minimize the problem, be resistant to pressure, and act defensively.

- Raise awareness of the problem behaviour and its causes, consequences, and positive alternatives.
- Establish a rapport, ask permission, and build trust.
- Offer encouragement and avoid lectures and confrontations.
- Provide tools and resources.

CR DR ER SoL

02 | Contemplation

Beginning to think about making a change



In this stage, the young person weighs the pros and cons of making a change, but is not yet committed to it.

- Encourage youth to consider the pros and cons; help them identify the negative effects of their current behaviour on others, and the positive effects of a future, healthier behaviour.
- Share your understanding that change can be hard and involve significant losses.

CR DR ER SoL SR

03 | Preparation

Getting ready to make a change



The young person is now committed, recognizing that the pros outweigh the cons. They start to work on a plan to make the change come to life.

- Encourage, excite, empower, and coach.
- Help youth to identify positive alternatives to problematic beliefs and behaviours.
- Help to problem solve and to see that others have succeeded.

SR SeL HR CC

04 | Action

Making a change



The young person is actively and consciously working on modifying their behaviour.

- Explore self-image and feelings about change.
- Help youth plan ahead by developing a realistic relapse prevention plan, and identify healthy substitutes.
- Help youth identify their supports.
- Check in often, especially during stressful and demanding times.

SeL HR CC RM SC

05 | Maintenance

Staying the course



In this stage, the young person is actively maintaining their changed behaviour and remaining vigilant.

- Work with youth to identify strategies for staying on track, and to deal with setbacks.
- Encourage youth to view temptation and setbacks as opportunities for learning.
- Help youth practice and use new coping strategies.
- Review long-term goals with youth.

HR CC RM SC

06 | Termination

The change has become a habit



The new behaviour has become a habit, and the young person can maintain the change for five years or more, without any temptation to relapse.

Change is a process, and setbacks are the norm rather than the exception. When youth experience a setback:

- Help them move quickly back to the better behaviour.
- Help maintain their self-image of the type of person they want to be, and their image of themselves as someone who is committed to changing.
- Reassess their change stage.

Framework Limitations

- This model focuses on individual change and assumes that change is within the control of the individual. It ignores the social context in which change occurs, such as socioeconomic status (SES) and systems of oppression.
- The lines between the stages can be arbitrary, with no set criteria for how to determine a person's Stage of Change.

Processes of Change

CR	Consciousness Raising	SeL	Self-Liberation
DR	Dramatic Relief	HR	Helping Relationships
ER	Environmental Reevaluation	CC	Counter Conditioning
SR	Self-Reevaluation	RM	Reinforcement Management
SoL	Social Liberation	SC	Stimulus Control