

Six Stages of Change¹

	Description	Indicators	Supervisor Activities	Worker Activities
ONE: P R E C O N T E M P L A T I O N	This is the entry point of a person into the change process. The individual has not even considered the prospect of change. The individual is unlikely to perceive a need for change. It is usually someone else who perceives a problem. At this stage, a person is not likely to respond positively to anyone (family or professional) being confrontive or demanding change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total resistance to doing anything • No willingness to meet, talk to a professional, or get assessed • Angry at any indication from another that there is a drug or alcohol problem • Blaming others • “Everything is O.K.” statements • Willingness to work on other things, but not drugs or alcohol • Refuse to let a professional in and work with him/her • Lack of awareness • Uses drugs, and believes there is no connection to problems 		
TWO: C O N T E M P L A T I O N	Once the person has some awareness of the problem, then the person enters the stage called Contemplation. It is a state of ambivalence where the individual both considers change and rejects it. If allowed to just talk about it, the person goes back and forth about the need to change and there being no justification for change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying one thing doing another • Rationalizations, minimizing • Anxiety is rising while trying some things which are not working • Both talking about change and arguing against it 		

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Six Stages of Change (continued)

Stage	Description	Indicators	Supervisor Activities	Worker Activities
Three: Preparation	The person is ready to change. This is a window of opportunity when the person has resolved the ambivalence enough to look at making change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admitting the need for change • Accepting negative ramifications of their use behavior • Asking for help • Starting to look at alternatives 		
Four: Action	The person engages in particular actions intended to bring about change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are starting to work out a plan • They are making changes in their use behavior • They are asking for professional help, or using professional help to make their plan more successful 		
Five: Maintenance	The person identifies and implements strategies to maintain progress, and to reduce the likelihood of slips or full relapse into old behaviors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are making the long-term life changes needed to “actualize” the changes made in the action stage • They focus less on not using and more on a “recovery” lifestyle 		
Six: Relapse	The person has a slip, returns to using at a level higher than acceptable to either the person or family. At times, person may slip and not regard it as serious enough to be concerned, yet someone may be at risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person uses alcohol or the drug they are trying to not use • Person increases beyond the amount they had reduced their use to • Person begins using a new drug and sees this as a failure. 		