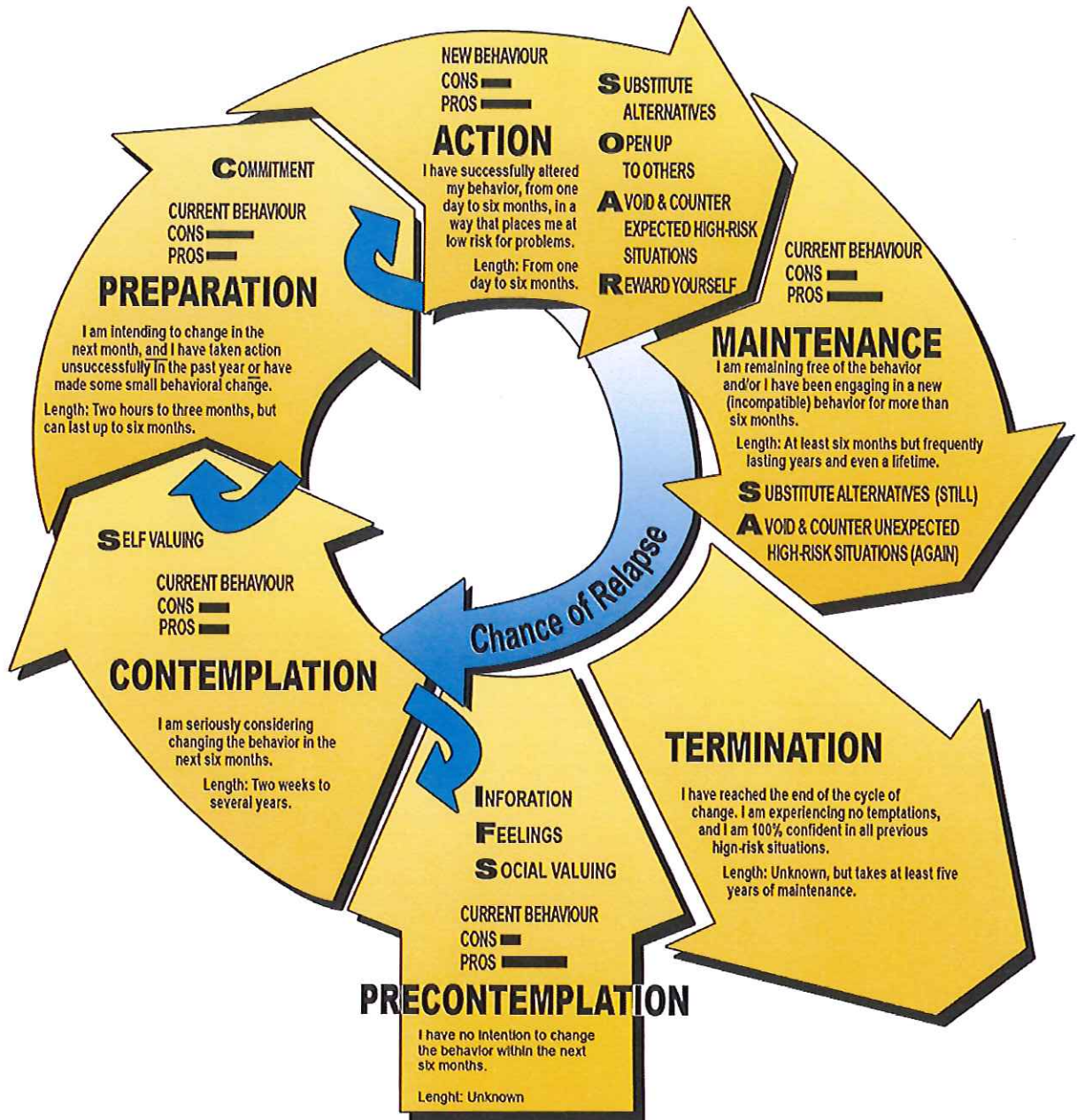


Your Guide to the Stages of Change



How to Move Through the Stages of Change

PRECONTEMPLATION

1

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Consider new information about yourself and the problem.
- Know the benefits of changing.
- Express your feelings about the demands on you and about potential solutions.
- Understands others' demands on you to change and how your behaviour affects the environment or others

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES:

- ◆ Have a professional, or someone you trust, give you feedback on your behaviour and how it may be affecting you and others.
- ◆ Monitor the behaviour to see when, where and how much you do it. Note your feelings before, during and afterwards.
- ◆ Do some reading to learn more about this behaviour,
- ◆ Tell someone your feelings about the demands on you to change and about what you believe your choices are.
- ◆ Look for ways that society and others will help you to change.
- ◆ Notice how your behaviour affects the environment of others.

CONTEMPLATION

2

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Work through any ambivalence: the costs and benefits of changing, with professional help if needed.
- Reduce the cost of changing.
- Consider what you value more than the problem behaviour or consider how resolving the problem, or starting the new behaviour, would be in agreement with what you value.
- Consider what kind of person you want to become.
- Take some small step in exploring behaviour change.
- Come to believe and feel that life would be significantly better **without the problem.**

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES:

- ◆ Write down the cost and benefits of changing.
- ◆ Decide how to reduce the cost of changing,
- ◆ Think about what you value most
- ◆ Close your eyes and imagine yourself as the kind of person you want to be.
- ◆ Take some small step, and begin to experiment with ways of changing.

PREPARATION

3

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Choose and commit to the best course of action.
- Prepare for action and if needed, get professional help.
- Make a contract with yourself and others.
- Publicly commit to at least one person to make the change

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES

- ◆ Just make a choice, or get help to make a decision.
- ◆ Write down your goals and, step-by-step, how you are going to get there.
- ◆ Commit to yourself to start by a certain date.
- ◆ Tell at least one trusted person in your life about your decision.

ACTION

4

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Substitute alternatives for problem behaviours
- Be open and trusting about problems and progress with someone who cares.
- Plan to avoid and counter expected situations that elicit the problem behaviour or deter new behaviour.
- Reward yourself or to be rewarded by others for making changes.
- Acknowledge to yourself when you successfully take a difficult step on your own.

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES:

- ◆ Start a pleasurable, non-addictive activity incompatible with the old.
- ◆ Learn meditation or stress management.
- ◆ Repeat positive self-statements.
- ◆ Learn to say no.
- ◆ Get help from a professional or trusted others on problems.
- ◆ Ask others to help in specific ways, tell them what you need and educate them about your experiences.
- ◆ Join a mutual self-help group to share and get support.
- ◆ Identify, and plan to avoid, leave, people and places that encourage problem behaviour or deter new behaviour.
- ◆ Change your environment. For example, remove temptations and put up reminder notes about what you need to do.
- ◆ Make a list of rewards, people and places that will support your actions.
- ◆ Give yourself rewards for the actions you have taken each day.
- ◆ Contract with others to give you rewards for specific steps taken.
- ◆ Look at what you did that resulted in the progress you are making.

MAINTENANCE

5

TO GET TO THE NEXT STAGE YOU WILL NEED TO:

- Continue to substitute alternatives for problem behaviours.
- Plan to avoid and counter situations that unexpectedly elicit the problem behaviour or deter new behaviour.

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES

- ◆ Continue to substitute new behaviours or activities incompatible with the old.
- ◆ Plan for unexpected high-risk situations, with professional help if needed.

TERMINATION:

6

- You have reached the end of the cycle of change.
- You are experiencing no temptations, and you are 100% confident in all previous high-risk situations.