

6 Stages of Change

Stage 1 Pre-Contemplation:

This stage is when you are not yet considering change, or you are unwilling or unable to change. As the client, this is the stage where you need to explore the meaning of events that brought you to treatment, or the results of previous treatment.

Stage 2 Contemplation:

Contemplation is when you acknowledge concerns and are considering the possibility of change, but are ambivalent and uncertain. In this stage you are weighing the pros and cons, examining your personal values in relation to change, looking at external and internal motivations, and making self-motivational statements of commitment and intent. You should be exploring your personal belief systems and motivations.

Stage 3 Preparation:

In this stage you are committed to and planning to make a change in the near future but are still considering what to do. It is important to clarify your goals, and your strategies for change. Here you will explore the expectancies you have for treatment, consider and lower your barriers to change, and enlist social support.

Stage 4 Action:

You are actively taking steps to change but have not yet reached a stable state. In this stage you are looking at what has worked for you in the past or what you have seen work for people you know. You are negotiating the barriers that you come to, and you are publicly announcing your plans for change.

Stage 5 Maintenance:

You have achieved initial goals such as abstinence, and are now working to maintain goals. You are looking for new substance free sources of pleasure, practicing coping strategies to avoid a return to use, reviewing the long term goals that were made, and developing a plan in case of a relapse. This is the stage where you are walking the walk and talking the talk.

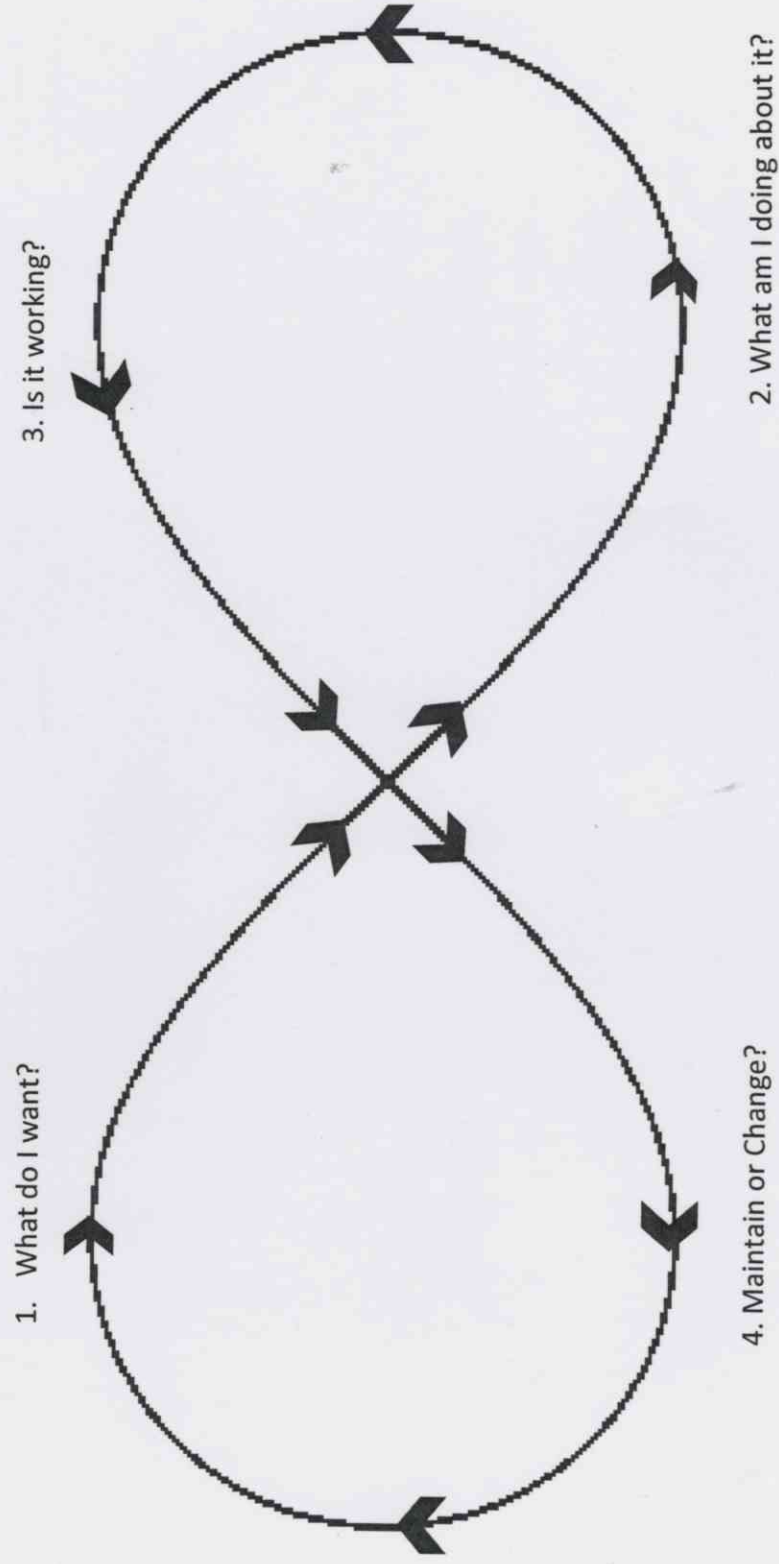
Stage 6 Recurrence / Relapse:

You have experienced a recurrence of symptoms and must now cope with the consequences and decide what to do next. You will need to reenter the change cycle. You will explore the meaning and reality of the recurrence as a learning opportunity, and find alternative coping strategies. It is important if you enter this stage to maintain supportive counselor contact.

Exercises for Change

1. Identify one change you would like to make.
2. What stage of change are you currently at in relation to the change you wish to make?
3. Rate your motivation to make this change on a scale of 0-10 (10 being highly motivated)
4. List any benefits you may have for maintaining the problematic behavior. List all the reasons for not changing, until you can't think of any more. (pros/cons)
5. List as many negative consequences and drawbacks to not making this change as you can think of.
6. What may block your desire to change? Circle all that apply. Then Rank those blocks to change from strongest to weakest.
 - A. Procrastination
 - B. Rejection Sensitivity
 - C. Poor Frustration / high tolerance to behavior
 - D. Unresolved Grief
 - E. Chaos
 - F. Other ideas: _____
7. What action are you going to take to overcome any of these blocks?
8. Identify two people who will support your change that are in your recovery environment.
9. Ask those two people in group today for suggestion in implementing the change and then document it here.

Feedback Loop



Is what I am doing congruent with what I want?

Is what I am doing or saying congruent with who I am?