

# Stages of Change<sup>\*</sup>

## 1. Pre-contemplation

- Person is unaware or under-aware of problem, so he/she has no intention to change behavior in the foreseeable future.
- It isn't that they can't see the solution; it is that they can't see the problem.

*Resistance to recognizing or modifying the problem is the hallmark of pre-contemplation.*

**GOAL - to raise ambivalence**

## 2. Contemplation

- Person is aware that a problem exists and is seriously thinking about overcoming it, but has not yet made a commitment to take any action.
- He/she is weighing the pros and cons of the problem and solutions.

*Serious consideration of problem resolution is the hallmark of contemplation.*

**GOAL - decide to change**

## 3. Determination

- Person has made some changes in his/her behavior, but it is not sufficient to resolve the problem.
- He/she intends to take more significant action in the next month.

*Transitioning from intention to behavior change is the hallmark of preparation.*

**GOAL - plan, commit, prepare**

## 4. Action

- Person modifies his/her behavior, experiences or environment to overcome the problem.
- This involves overt behavioral changes and requires a significant commitment of time and energy.

*Modification of target behavior to an acceptable criterion and significant overt efforts to change are the hallmarks of action.*

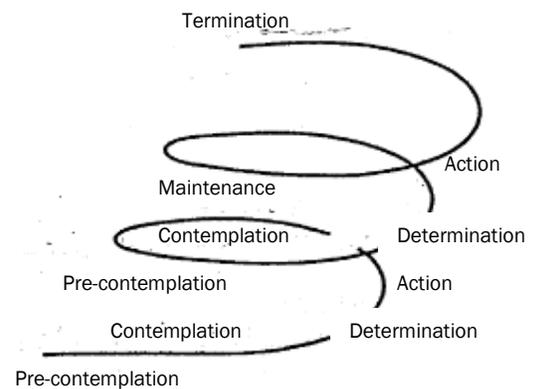
**GOAL - to make mental & behavioral changes**

## 5. Maintenance

- Person works to prevent relapse and to consolidate gains attained during action.
- Person is able to remain free of addictive behavior and to consistently engage in new behavior that is incompatible with active addiction.
- This is a continuation of change.

*Stabilizing behavior change and avoiding relapse are the hallmarks of maintenance.*

**GOAL - to revise lifestyle to be consistent with change**



Ⓢ Change includes all 5 stages.

Ⓢ Change is usually not linear, but spiral.

Ⓢ During relapse, people regress to an earlier stage.

Ⓢ If demoralized, the person will go back to pre-contemplation and stay there.

Ⓢ If encouraged, people do not regress to beginning;

<sup>\*</sup>Based on Prochaska, James et al, "In Search of How People Change," American Psychologist, Sept., 1992